Journal of the
EAST PAKISTAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Editor-in-Chief

DR. MD. MOHAR ALI

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Journal of the
EAST PAKISTAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Vol. I. No. I March 1968

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EAST PAKISTAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 1967-68

EDITORIAL BOARD

Printed by Mr. M. Ali at the Paramount Press, 9, Hatkhola Road. Dacca-3 and Published by Dr. Md. Mohar Ali, Deptt. of History, University of Dacca, on behalf of the East Pakistan History Association.

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* *Journal of the East Pakistan History Association* will be published twice in a year, in March and September.
* Research articles in any of the National languages of Pakistan or in English will be acceptable for publication.
* Articles are to be sent to the Editor-in-Chief at least two months before the date of publication.

JOURNAL OF THE EAST PAKISTAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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Rajshahi Zamindari: A Short History of its Origin

A. B. MUHIUDDIN MAHMOOD *

At the present time the name Rajshahi applies to a district in East Pakistan, to the administrative head-quarters of a Division and to a University. But the district of Rajshahi in both its name and present land area is a British creation, "an example of the process by which a native zamindari has been moulded into a British District."[1] In the *Ain-i-Akbari*, the sources of our earliest references to the administrative units of Mughal Bengal, there is no mention of Rajshahi. In the first quarter of the seventeenth century "the successors of Islam Khan had made Rajshahi and Pabna districts into fiscal units of the Mughal administration."[2] Finally from 1706 onwards the Nator family began the process of assembling smaller zamindaris and taluqdaris into the great Rajshahi Zamindari. The area of the present Rajshahi district hardly exceeds four thousand square miles, but the Rajshahi of early period, when the Zamindari was virtually coterminous with the administrative district composed an area of about thirteen thousand square miles, one of the most unwieldy and important districts of Bengal. It extended from Bhagalpur on the west to Dacca in the east, a distance of some two hundred miles, thus including a large part of the modern districts of Malda, Bogra, Pabna and Faridpur, and also embraced a large tract of land called *parganah* Niz Rajshahi south of the Padma which now lies in Murshidabad district. Because of its proximity to the city of Murshidabad, then the capital of the Nawabs of Bengal, the Zamindars of Rajshahi

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1. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. XXI, p. 162,
2. *The History of Bengal*, ed., J.N. Sarkar, vol. II, p. 414.

played a significant role in the Nawab's administration of Bengal in the eighteenth century.

Regarding the origin of the name Rajshahi there is considerable speculation and difference of opinion. The popular view is that Rajshahi derives its name from the concourse of *rajas* and other noble families in the district.[1] This is a specious claim, however, and historians have sought to trace the name back to the accession of Raja Ganesh or Kans, the Hindu chief of Bhaturia in the fifteenth century. The Raja, having ousted the Muslim ruler of Gaur, usurped the throne of Bengal, and according to Blochmann, was consequently known as Rajshahi. Blochmann argued that "the district Rajshahi is connected with Raja Kans ; for just as Mahmud Shāhi, Barbakshāhi and other names in the neighbourhood of Rajshahi refer to the Bengal Kings Mahmud Shāh and Barbak Shāh, so can Rajshahi, i.e., Rajashāhi, only refer to the Rāja who was the Shāh, i.e., to a Hindu Rāja who ascended a Musalman throne. In its shortened form, Rajshāhi is certainly a most extraordinary hybrid ; for the Hindi rāj is the same as the Persian shāhī."[2] Beveridge rejected this view, pointing out that Rajshahi is a comparatively modern name, and the district remote from the kingdom of Ganesh. His own suggestion, however, that the district might have got its name from he Muslim Rajās of Birbhum, seems equally unacceptable.[3] A Bengali scholar has tried more recently to discover some connection between Raja-Man Singh,[4] the Mughal general who established his Headquarters at Raj Mahal, and Rajshahi ; but all these explanations, if plausible, remain hypothetical and unproven.

If the name Rajshahi is of uncertain origin, we are on firmer ground in studying the growth of the zamindari, though history here too has legends attached. When the British took over the revenue administration of Bengal they found the Rajshahi Zamindari well established. It had been created by the suppression of a number of inferior zamindars, and consolidation of their lands under one big zamindar, the Raja of Nator. Unlike many old and illustrious zamindar families of Bengal, the Nator Rajas could not trace their history as territorial magnates beyond the early eighteenth century. They were new zamindars created and sustained by the strict revenue policy of Nawab Murshid Quli Khan. The strictness of the revenue policy in-

1. *Imperial Gazetteer*, vol. XXI, p. 162. Rajshahi - 'the royal territory', because there were many big Zamindars in the district such as the House of Nator, Dighapatiya, Puthia, Dubalhati and Balihar, etc.

2. H. Blochmann, 'The History and Geography of Bengal', *J.A.S.B.*, 1875, vol, XLV, No. III, p. 287

3. H. Beveridge, 'The Original Rajah of Rajshahi', *J.A.S.B.*, January 1893, pp. 13-17.

4. K. P. Vandopadhyaya, *Banglar Itihasa*. (Nawabi Amal), pp. 65-66.

troduced by the Nawab caused the ruin of many ancient families who failed to pay their revenue dues, yielding place to new comers. The most fortunate of the beneficiaries of this process of replacement was the Nator family.[1] The family also benefited by another feature of Murshid Quli Khan's revenue policy—his introduction of the *chakla* system and encouragement to the formation of big zamindaris. Under the Nawab half the land revenue of Bengal was realized from six major zamindars, of whom the Nator Raja was one.

According to legend the founders of this illustrious family traced their ancestry to one of the five Brahmans of Kanauj who had settled in *Varendra*-the modern Barind,[2] whence the high esteem in which they were held. More prosaically the line is traced to Kamdeva, a *tahsilder* of Baraihati in *Parganah* Lashkerpur, a minor official of the Puthia Raj family.[3] He had three sons, Ramjivan, Raghunandan and Bishnuram, and it is in their day that the phenomenal rise of the family took place. The effective founder of the zamindari was the second son, Raghunandan, who began his career as flower gatherer to the Puthia House, in which family he had been brought up.[4] There are many stories regarding his rise to prominence. On one occasion, it is said he was plucking flowers for *Puja* (worship of the gods) when, becoming fatigued, he fell asleep in the garden. Soon a venomous snake came out and spread its hood to protect his head from the scorching rays of the sun. When this was reported to Darpa Narain, the then head of the Puthia family, he predicted that one day Raghunandan would be a great man and that the whole of Rajhsahi would come under his possession. He at once sent for Raghunandan, announced his prophecy and extorted from him an assurance that when he would become zamindar of Rajshahi he would not deprive the Puthia family of their ancient lands in *Parganah*

1. K.C. Mitra, "The Territorial Aristocracy of Bengal", *The Calcutta Review,* January 1873, vol. LVI, pp. 6-7.

Mitra was born in 1822. He was the brother of Piari Chand Mitra, a distinguished social reformer and literary figure in the nineteenth century Bengal. Like his brother Kishori Chand had also literary aptitude and in 1844 was appointed Assistant Secretary to the Asiatic Society. He largely contributed to the *Bengal Spectator, The Bengal Harkaru* and the *Calcutta Review,* and gained thereby considerable reputation. In 1846 he was appointed a Deputy Magistrate at Rajshahi. Afterwards he became a junior Magistrate of the Calcutta Police Bench. For some years he occupied the Bench with credit to himself. He was some years in charge of the *Indian Field,* a newspaper, which later on incorporated itself with the *Hindu Patriot.* In 1859 he became a self the member of the British India Association. He died in August 1873.

2. *The History of Bengal,* vol. II, p. 414, & K.N. Chaudhuri, *Rajshahir Samkhipta Itihasa,* p. 146.

3. *Bengal Revenue Consultations,*hereafter cited as *B.R.C.,* 7 June, 1774, Range 59, vol. 46 & *Factory Records* vol. 8. 5 May 1774.

4. K. C. Mitra, *op. cit.,* p. 4.

Lashkerpur.[1] This Raghunandan readily promised. This legend receives some support from the fact that when the East India Company acquired the Diwani in 1765 they found the Nator family master of the whole vast Rajshahi Zamindari except for Lashkerpur, which, though situated at the heart of Rajshahi, was still governed independently. Was this really because Raghunandan was true to his word out of respect and gratitude for his master's family ? Popular belief would say yes.

Whatever the legends may be, it is a fact that Darpa Narain helped Raghunandan in his career. Finding him a man of ability and intelligence, Darpa Narain appointed him his *wakil* or representative at Jahangirnagar (Dacca), the capital of Bengal.[2] This event undoubtedly was a turning point in his career. When the capital was transferred to Murshidabad, he was employed in a similar capacity as his master's representative there.[3] As Raghunandan was a man of parts and ability he soon acquired great proficiency in the laws and regulations prevalent in the Nawab's court. As a result he soon caught the attention of the *Sadar Qanungo*, who in the Provincial hierarchy of the Mughal administration was the most influential and powerful officer after the *Nazim* and the *Diwan*.[4] Being satisfied with Raghunandan's knowledge both as a financier and lawyer the *qanungo* appointed him his deputy or *naib qanungo*. His duty as *Naib* was to prepare statements of accounts and to stamp them with the seal of his master before submission to the Nawab and then to the Emperor. He earned the entire confidence of this master so that the latter had no hesitation in entrusting him with his seal. Raghunandan was not slow to take advantage of this situation for his personal aggrandisement and soon he became the favourite of Diwan Murshid Quli Khan (then Kartalab Khan).

Raghunandan's advancement in the service of Murshid Quli Khan followed from his support to the Diwan when the latter came into conflict with Azim-ush-Shan, grandson of the Emperor Aurangzeb, and *Subadar* of Bengal from 1697 to 1704. Their quarrel centered round various financial reforms introduced by the Diwan and the Prince's interference in revenue

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid*, pp. 4-5. It was the Mughal tradition and custom "for the land holders of distinction and other principal inhabitants to maintain in proportion to their rank, an intercourse with the ruling power, and in person or by vakil or agent to be in constant attendance at the seat of Government, or with the officers in authority over the district where their lands or their concerns were situated. To establish an interest at the darbar, and to procure the protection of some powerful patron, were to them objects of unceasing solicitude.'
3. *Ibid.*, p. 4
4. The *Qanungoes* had numerous functions besides being the expounders of local custom and usages. All documents attested by them were to be received as authoritative. The *Sardar Qanungo* was in certain respects a check upon the authority of the *Diwan*.

matters.[1] The reforms restricted the Prince, who was censured by the Emperor for his extravagance and for his illegal private trade. The prince then determined to have the Diwan assassinated. The conspiracy failed and Murshid Quli Khan moved his headquarters to Maksudabad, later known as Murshidabad.[2] He also received the commendation of the Emperor for his efficient management of the revenues and regular despatch of money to the imperial court.[3] The Prince, all the more aggrieved by the favour shown to the Diwan, sought further occasions to discredit him with the Emperor.[4] So when in 1703 Murshid Quli Khan prepared to visit the Emperor in the Deccan and to submit an account of the Provincial finances, the Prince ordered the *Sadar Qanungo*, Darpa Narain, not to sign and seal the accounts, and so to indicate they were not authentic. The Diwan was informed that unless he paid three lakhs of rupees to the *Sadar Qanungo*, the accounts would not be certified. Murshid Quli Khan thereupon offered to pay one lakh on his return from the Deccan, but this was refused. Kishori Chand Mitra states that Murshid Quli Khan then sent for Raghunandan, the *Naib Qanungo*, and asked him to save the situation by affixing his master's seal to the accounts. Unable to resist the temptation to win the favour of the Diwan Raghunandan at once did so, and without any condition.[5] This account is not borne out, however, by the author of the *Riad-al-Salatin*, who states that Jai Narain, the other *Sadar Qanungo*, signed the accounts ; nor by the fact that Darpa Narain, the supposed bribe demander, remained high in Murshid Quli Khan's favour.[6] But if there is some doubt about the way in which Raghunandan won Murshid Quli

1. The Mughal Provincial administration was in some sort an administrative dyarchy-the *Subadar* representing the Police and Criminal administration, and the *Diwan* the Civil and revenue branch. There occurred frequent clashes between the two.

2. K.P. Vandopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-37. About the transfer of the seat of revenue administration from Dacca to Murshidabad Vandopahyaya states as follows: দেওয়ানের দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস ছিল, আওরঙ্গজেব সম্পূর্ণভাবে তাঁহার কৃত কার্য্যের সমর্থন করিবেন। "কিন্তু যুবরাজ পাছে পুনরায় তাঁহার প্রাণ নাশের চেষ্টায় প্রবৃত্ত হন এই আশঙ্কায়, ঢাকায় থাকা নিরাপদ নহে স্থির করিলেন। অতঃপর জমিদারবর্গ ও কানুনগো প্রভৃতি দেওয়ান খান সংস্থষ্ট রাজ কর্মচারিগণের সহিত পরামর্শ করিয়া, যেখান হইতে রাজকার্য্য সুশৃঙ্খলায় নির্বাহিত হইতে পারে, এমন কোন সুবিধামত স্থানের নির্বাচন প্রয়াস পাইলেন। কয়েক দিন তর্কবিতর্কের পর, চুনাখালী পরগনাস্থিত মুসুখসাবাদ বঙ্গের কেন্দ্রস্থলে স্থাপিত বলিয়া, উহাই দেওয়ানী আফিসের উপযুক্ত স্থান বলিয়া বিবেচিত হইল। সকল দিক বিবেচনা করিতে হইলে বঙ্গবিহারের রাজকার্য্য নির্বাহের জন্য সে কালের পক্ষে মুর্শিদাবাদই উৎকৃষ্ট স্থান; তখনকার ব্যবস্থায় এখান হইতে সর্বত্র গতিবিধি ও সকল দিকে দৃষ্টি রাখারও সুবিধা ছিল। বিশেষতঃ, পূর্ববঙ্গ জায়গীর প্রধান স্থান বলিয়া রাজস্ববিভাগের কর্তা দেওয়ানের সহিত ঐ বিভাগ অপেক্ষা পশ্চিম বঙ্গেরই বিশেষ ঘনিষ্ঠ সম্বন্ধ ছিল। এই সমস্ত কারণে মুর্শিদাবাদে দেওয়ানখানার প্রতিষ্ঠা সম্পূর্ণ সুবিবেচনার কার্য্য হইয়াছিল, তাহা স্বীকার করিতে হইবে।" (*Ibid*, p. 37.)

3. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

4. A. Karsm, *Murshid Quli Khan and His Times*, p. 25.

5. K.C. Mitra, *op. cit.*, p. 5

6. A. Karim, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-68.

Khan's favour, there is no doubt that he did so. By 1716 the English speak of him as a revenue official and farmer of customs,[1] and in 1717 they report his appointment as *darogah* of Murshidabad mint.[2] It was owing to the good grace in which he stood at the *darbar* that he was able to secure zamindaris in Rajshahi and Bhusna, held in the name of his elder brother Ramjivan.[3]

During the period of the Mughal rule in Bengal land revenues were collected through a variety of agents, of which the zamindars were the most prominent. Several categories of zamindar existed, whose nature was summed up by Muhammad Reza Khan in a statement to the Calcutta Council as follows : "Some of them subsisted previous to the introduction of the Mohammedan religion into this country whose proprietors having acknowledged their subjection and agreed to pay their rents to the Mohammedan emperor were accordingly continued in their possessions. A second kind is those which have been cleared off jungle and cultivated from a barren desert state, the zamindars of which are called *jungle-burs*. A third kind is those which have been purchased.[4] A fourth kind is those which have been granted as a free gift.[5] Besides the foregoing kinds there is another kind called *sanady*, zamindaris of which are the following viz., the first is when the king grants to any person a certain quantity of waste jungle land to be by him brought into a state of cultivation after which he pays a rent for it to Government. A second is when the king or ruling magistrate turns out a zamindar without fault or reason and gives a *sanad* for it to another. A third kind is when a zamindar dies and some person makes a representation to the King of his being dead without heirs and obtains a *sanad* for his zamindari of which he keeps possession for some generations, till at length the proper heirs appear. A fourth kind is when a principal zamindar arbitrarily usurps the possession of other small zamindaris and afterwards applies to the King or the ruling Magistrates for a *sanad* for the same, who grants him one in consideration of his paying a *nazarana*. A fifth kind is when a zamindar dies without heirs and the King for some time keeps his zamindari *khas*, but at length grants it to another for a *nazarana*."[6] Reza Khan might properly have added that zamindaris might also be granted to others upon forfeiture for default in payment of revenues, or for

1. *Bengal Public Consultations*, hereafter referred to as *B.P.C.*, 10 December, 1716, Range I.vol. 3.
2. *Ibid.*, 18 July 1717, R. I. vol. 3.; & C.W.B. Rous, *Dissertation Concerning The Landed Property of Bengal*, Appendix, No. IV., p. 246.
3. A. Karim, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
4. The zamindaris obtained through purchase were known as *Intikali*.
5. And the title *Ahkami* was given to free gifts.
6. Quoted in N.K. Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal*, vol. II, pp. 7-8.

rebellion. As will be seen it was by grants under such circumstances that Raghunandan acquired most of his estates, though he did also purchase one zamindari.

Raghunandan secured the first portion of the Rajsahi Zamindari in 1706 when Parganah Banugachi was handed over to his brother Ramjivan after its Chaudhuris Ganeshram and Bhagabati Charan had mismanaged the estate and become constant revenue defaulters.[1] The next addition, and a very important one was that of Parganah Bhaturia. This had been under the management of Rani Sarbani, widow of Rāja Ram Krishana, the Brahmin zamindar of Bhaturia. The Rani having died without any children, the zamindari was bestowed on Balaram,a brother of Ramkrishna.[2] As he was blind and deaf, and was quite unable to undertake the task of its management, the *parganah* was placed under Raghunandan. Within a short time Raghunandan had settled the entire zamindari in the names of his brother Ramjivan and nephew Kalika Prasad. Raghunandan procured a *sanad* from the Emperor confirming their possession in 1711 A.D.[3] The other important acquisition of the Nator family was the *parganah* Niz Rajshahi. It is probable that the whole zamindari derived its name from this *parganah*. According to the author of *Raid-al-Salatin*, Udainarain, the zamindar of Chakla Rajshahi, which lay south of the Ganges, refused to pay the revenues and revolted against the Nawab's authority. He collected a large following and took shelter in the hills of Sultanabad and there defied the Nawab. The Nawab sent a large force under Raghunandan who within a short time defeated the rebel. Undainarain committed suicide to avoid the wrath of Mushid Quli Khan.[4] "In 1713 he [Raghunandan] was allowed to annex Rajshahi as a reward for his capture of Udainarain." [5] Soon after this the Nawab bestowed *parganah* Naldi upon Ramjivan. This too was a transfer consequent upon a revolt by its owner, Sitaram Rai of Bhusna. [6] Sitaram was the son of a Hindu revenue collector under the Muslim *faujdar* of Bhusna. He took the lease of *parganah* Naldi from the Nawab with a promise to pay regular revenues and to suppress the Afghan bandits there. In course of time he created a big estate for himself and dreamt of establishing an independent kingdom. In pride of his power he defied the authority of the Nawab, oppressed and robbed the inferior zamindars and stopped

1. K.C. Mitra, *op. cit.*, p. 6 & Rouse, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-46.
2. *B.R C.* 7 June 1774. Range 49. vol. 46.
3. K. C. Mitra, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
4. Ghulam Husain Salim, *Riad al-Salatin*, p. 259.
5. *B,R.C.* 15 Februay, 1780. R. 50. vol. 22. & J. Shore's Minute, 18 June 1789, respecting The Permanent Settlement of the Lands in Bengal Provinces.
6. L.S.S. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazatteers*; *Jessore*, p. 35.

paying revenue to the treasury. To suppress this lawlessness and punish Sitaram the Nawab ordered *faujdar* Abu Turab to deal with the situation. But the *faujdar* was killed in a sudden attack by Sitaram's men. As the *faujdar* was related to Prince Azim-ush Shan, Murshid Quli Khan could no longer brook Sitarm's audacity. A strong force was dispatched under the command of his brother-in-law Baksh Ali Khan. In this campaign against Sitaram, Ramjivan, the co-founder of the Nator House and his diwan Dayaram Rai co-operated. [1] As a reward for their services the Nawab transferred the whole of Sitaram's zamindari of Bhusna, together with *Parganah* Ibrahimpur to Ramjivan in 1714. The greatness of the Nator family was established with this dismemberment of Sitaram's estate. Another acquisition to the zamindari was tanki Sarubpur, five miles from Jessore in Sarkar Mahmudabad. This zamindari was held by two Afghan chiefs, Shuja'at and Naja'at Khan. They were notorious for their lawlessness and plundering habits. At one time they even threatened to plunder Murshidabad. Nawab Murshid Quli Khan was not a man to tolerate lawlessness in his viceroyalty and he captured the chiefs who passed the rest of their lives in prison. After their extirpation the Nawab settled their zamindari in 1718 with his favourite Ramjivan, who became renowned for his competent management and punctual payment of revenues. [2] Subsequently, Ramjivan purchased *parganah* Havily and Fatehbad from the zamindar of Jalalpur (Dacca).

By these successive additions the gigantic principality of Rajshahi was built up during the lifetime of its founders. It became the second largest zamindari of Bengal, rivalling Burdwan for the premier position. Tradition called it an estate of fifty two lakh of rupees.[3]

This Zamindari of Rajshahi thus became the best example of Murshid Quli Khan's policy of creating big zamindars. It was through Raghunandan that the Rajshahi Zamindari was assembled, but its successful consolidation was largely due to the shrewdness and energy of his elder brother Ramjivan. He established a strong central authority and maintained peace and order in the vast estate. For strategic reasons he made the key town of Nator the principal seat of his zamindari. [4] He surrounded it with defensive ditches and being a great builder beautified it with numerous buildings, temples and tanks. The huge stagnant sheet of water called

1. *The History of Bengal*, vol. II, p. 414 ; & *Proceedings of the Council of Revenue*, 31 March 1783, R. 68, vol. 21.
2. *Riad*, pp. 279-80 ; Salim 'Allah, *Tawarikhe-Bangala*, pp. 61-62.
3. J. Westland, *A Report on the District of Jessore*, p. 61.
4. Nator remained the headquarters of Rajshahi district until 1825 when the headquarters were removed to Boalia, the present site.

Laldighi is said to have been excavated by him in building the *Rajbari* palace.[1] He also established two subsidiary headquarters, one at Barnagar on the banks of the Bhagirathi, not far from Murshidabad, and the other at Sherpur in Bogra district. Throughout his life he maintained cordial relations with Murshid Quli Khan, who was greatly pleased with his punctual payment of the revenues and procured for him a *sanad* and a robe of honour from the Emperor.

He was much aided in the administration of Rajshahi by his agent Dayaram Rai, later appointed his diwan. Dayaram was a first-rate man of business, and his contribution to the fortunes of the zamindari have been assessed by Kishori Chand Mitra as follows: "Were it not for this good management, Ramjivan could not have extended or preserved his zamindari. In truth, while Raghunandan at Murshidabad was the creator of he Nator estate, Dayaram was the consolidator of it. While one was the Clive, the other was the Hastings of the Raj."[2] His merit was recoganised both by Ramjivana, who conferred on him valuable *taluqs* which in the course of time became the estate of Dighapatiya, and by the Nawab, who conferred the title of Rai Rayan on him for his valiant services.[3] As will be seen Dayaram later became the guardian and manager of Ramjivan's adopted son.

Raghunandan died in 1724 without leaving any heir. His death was then followed by that of Kalika Prasad, Ramjivan's only son, and in 1730 by that of Ramjivan himself. Before his death, however, Ramjivan adopted a boy named Ramkanta as his heir. The only other survivor was Devi Prasad, the son of Bishnuram, Ramjivan's brother, who had never had any share in the Rajshahi zamindari. Nevertheless, Ramjivan proposed to divide the esate, ten-sixteenths to Ramkanta, six-sixteenths to Devi Prasad. Devi Prasad, however, considered Ramkanta as a usurper, and despite Ramjivan's efforts to placate him by sharing the zamindari, showed such bad blood towards Ramkanta that in the end Ramjivan left the entire zamindari to Ramkanta.

Ramkanta thus succeeded to the whole zamindari in 1730,[4] at which date he was a yong man of eighteen years of age and entirely inexperienced

1. O' Malley, *District Gazetteer*, *Rajshahi*, p. 170.
2. K. C. Mitra, *op. cit.*, p. 8
3. *The History of Bengal*, vol. II, p. 414.
4. O'Malley gives 1730 as the date of Ramkanta's succession to the zamindari, and so does Akkhai Maitra, a noted Bengali historian. Kishori Chand Mitra, in his article in the *Calcutta Review* gives the date of Rmjivan's death as 1737, but the existence of a *sanad* from the Emperor Muhammad Shah of 1735 shows that by that date Ramkanta was in possession of the zamindari. O' Malley, *op.cit.*, p. 171.
Akhai Maitra's opinoion is quoted in *Rajshahir Samkhipta Itihasa*, by K. N. Chaudhuri, p. 150. See also K.C. Mitra, *op. cit.* pp. 8-9.

in zamindari administration. It is said that he passed most of his time in religious pursuits and neglected business affairs as a consequence. Happily, however, Ramjivan had left him in the care of Dayaram, who thus for a time became *de facto* zamindar and continued his careful management, while Ramkanta's wife Rani Bhabani also proved to be a woman of great foresight, sagacity and intelligence. Neverthelss, either through inattention to business or through the enmity and intrigues of Devi Prasad, Ramkanta lost possession of Rajshahi. K.C. Mitra and K.N. Chaudhuri both ascribe this loss to Ramkanta's mismanagement, relating that Ramkanta fell into arrears with his payment of land revenue, and that when Dayaram remonstrated with him he took this as a personal insult. Believing malicious representations that Dayaram was more an enemy than a real friend to the Nator Raj, he relieved him of his post.[1] Ramkanta thus played into the hands of his enemy Devi Prasad, for the diwan proceeded to Murshidabad and related the maladministration of Ramkanta and the constant arrears to the Nawab Ali Vardi Khan. The Nawab, having great confidence in Dayaram, acted on his advice, depriving Ramkanta of the Zamindari which was then bestowed on Devi Prasad.[2] More trustworthy,however,is the report from the Provincial Concil at Murshidabad, written in May, 1774 which ascribes the upheaval directly to Devi Prasad's intrigues : "Devi Prasad, during the time of Ali Vardi Khan seized and retained the zamindari for four months without any *sanad*, being supported by Mustafa Khan, a ***Risaldar*** of great authority. Ramkanta, however, soon recovered possession, which he afterwards held till the day of his death."[3] It is said that Dayaram had a great part in the restoration, and that moved by pity for Ramkanta and regard for Rani Bhabani, he utilised the good will of Jagat Seth and other nobles to convince the Nawab that Ramkanta was the rightful owner and to secure his restoration.[4] Since Dayaram continued as diwan of Ramkanta and then of his widow, the Rani, the account of theProvincial Council seems the more probable version of the brief loss of the zamindari by Ramkanta. Further evidence would also seem to support the view that it was not mismanagement that caused the temporary loss of the zamindari. From James Grant's *Analysis of The Finances of Bengal* we find that whereas in Ramjivan's time the zamindari consisted of 139 *parganahs* and paid Rs. 17,41, 987 in land revenue, in Ramkanta's day there were 164 *parganahs* and their

1. K. C. Mitra, *op. cit.*, p. 9. & K.N. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-59.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *B. R. C.*, 7 June, 1774, Range 49, vol. 46. & *Factory Records*, 5 May, 1774. vol. 8.
4. K. C. Mitra, *op. cit.* p. 9.

revenue paid had risen to Rs. 18,53, 325.[1] It would seem that both the size and the revenues of the estate had increased. The *sanad* granted by the Emperor Muhammad Shah II in 1735 had enjoined on Ramkanta that "he shall remit the Peshcush etc. and the balances in stated instalments to the treasury, and realize the revenues, (after taking credit to himself for the Muscoorat Nancar, etc.) from year to year in the customary manner, and at the usual seasons ; conducting himself towards the ryots and inhabitants in general in a conciliating manner, and being indefatigable in the expulsion and chastisement of the refractory—he shall be careful that no thieves, highwaymen, or disturbers of he public peace, take shelter within the limits of his jurisdiction, and he is otherwise to exert his endeavours to promote the comfort and security of the ryots, the increase of cultivation, population, and the revenue."[2] The figures given by Grant suggest that Ramkanta had complied with these instructions and had proved himself a competent manager of the Zamindari.[3]

Ramkanta died in 1748 leaving a daugheter Tara. He was succeeded by his wife Rani Bhabani. Before his death he permitted the Rani to adopt a son and heir in accordance with the Hindu law.[4] Thus Rani Bhabani became the *de jure* zamindar of Rajshahi. At the outset she did not assume the responsibility of management into her hands, but entrusted the charge of administration to her son-in-law Raghunath.[5] However, the latter soon died and the entire burden devolved on her, though she was ably assisted by the veteran diwan Dayarm, who greatly devoted to her. Holwell describes the position of he Rajshahi zamindari in his day as follows : "at Nator, about ten days travel from North-East of Calcutta, resides the family of the most ancient and opulent of the Hindu Princes of Bengal, Raja Ram Kanta, [who] was succeeded by his wife, Rani Bhawani ; whose Diwan or Minister

1. J. Grant, *Analysis of the Finances in Bengal* (publlished in the Fifth Report, I(pp. 302-07.

2. Quoted in James Grant's *An Inquiry into the Nature of Zemindary Tenures in Landed Property of Bengal*, Appendix No. III. B. pp. 77-78.
The *Sanad* also instructs Ramkanta that "he shall be attentive to the protection of the high roads, that travellers may pass and repass without danger or molestation ; but if a robbery should be committed, he shall produce the perpetrators with their booty ; which shall be restored to its owner, and the delinquents given up for punishment ; if he fails to produce the culprits, he shall consider himself responsible for the amount plundered. He shall take especial care, that no individual within the boundaries of his zamindary shall practise any unlawful deeds or drunkenness, and he is strictly forbidden from levying any *Aboabs* (exactions) prohibited by the Imperial Edict. He shall transmit the requisite accounts of the district in the usual manner, signed by himself and *qanungoes* of the *Soubah* to the Public Exchequer."

3. In addition, during Alivardi Khan's time the Rajshahi Zamindari paid Rs. 3,02,480 as *chauth* to the Marathas. Quoted in James Grant's *Analysis*, p. 314.

4. Ram Krishna was adopted by Rani Bhabani to succeed her.

5. J. Grant, *Analysis*, p. 324.

was Dayaran of the tuli caste or tribe. They possess a tract of country of about 35 days travel; and under settled government, their stipulated annual rents to the crown were 70 lakh of sicca rupees,—the real revenues, about one crore and an half.'" [1]

The Maharani was a lady of great virtues and capacity for business. K.C. Mitra states that on account of her efficient management the profits from several *parganahs* were increased substantially and that the ruin of others was arrested. [2] She maintained cordial relations with the Nawabs of Murshidabad, preserved the estate during the Maratha ravages, and thereafter maitained it in peace and tranquillity. When the East India Company took over the Diwani administration of Bengal in 1765 they found the zamindary exhibiting an appearance of opulence and dignity, and they maintained the Rani in undisturbed possession of the zamindari.

The Rani also upheld the dignity and prestige of the Zamindari by her social activities. She granted large areas to Brahmans as *lakhiraj* or rent-free land. The Amini Commission of 1776 reported that 4,29,149 *bighas* of land came under this denomination.[3] "At Benaras alone," O'Malley writes, "she is said to have established 380 Shrines, guest houses etc., and many temples were built in other parts of the country and endowed with money and land.The great embanked road in the Nator subdivision which runs east to Bhawanipur in Bogra, and is still called Rani Bhawani's Jangal, was constructed by her, and numerous tanks and sarais were built with her money. Doctors were entertained to give medical relief to the poor in different villages, and her charity extended to the animal world." [4] She was also a great patron of Hindu learning and she bestowed large endowments for the maintenance of education. The last remnanats of her educational charities survived even to the time of Lord Bentinck and Lord Auckland, when W. Adam, in his report on the 'State of education in Bengal' found schools at Basudevpur and Samaskhalasi still in receipt respectively of eight and sixty rupees a year from her zamindari.[5] For her charity, no less than for her management of the estate, she won general admiration.

In subsequent times different revenue experiments were conducted by the Company in Rajshahi from 1765 to 1793. Briefly to review the later history of the Nator House, we may note that in 1790 Raja Ramkrishna, the adopted son of Rani Bhabani, was

1. J. Z. Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events*, p. 192.
2. K. C. Mitra, *op. cit.*, p. 10
3. *B.M. Add. MSS.* 29087, pp. 132-33.
4. O'Malley, *Rajshahi*, p. 172.
5. W. Adam, *Report on the State of Education in Bengal*, (1835 & 1838), Ed. A. Basu, pp. 166-71.

allowed to engage for the entire Zamindari on a permanent assessment of Rs. 23,28,000. Like his mother, Ramkrishna was exceedingly pious and passed most of his time in religious duties; but unlike her he took little interest in the management of the estate and allowed himself to be plundered on every front by his agents, notably by Kali Sanker, the founder of the Narail Raj.[1] "Then came the Permanent Settlement which expedited its ruin further," since the strict regulation "for the recovery of revenue arrears by sale of the defaulter's estate were constantly called into requisition against the Rāja, and parcel after parcel of his hereditary property was sold."[2] In 1796 Ramkrishna died and his zamindari was partitioned between his two sons Shibnath and Bishwanath. Like their father they too neglected punctual collection of the revenues and the efficient management of the zamindari. As a consequence of their folly and sloth the estate shrank still further. The zamindari lingered on in its emaciated form till it was finally extinguished by the promulgation of the East Pakistan Land Acquisition Act of 1951.

1. K. C. Mitra, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.
2. *Imerial Gazetteer*, vol. XXI, p. 162.

Nawab Shaista Khan and the English East India Company's Trade in Bengal: The working of the Parwana of 1669

MD. MOHAR ALI *

With the conclusion of the Anglo-Dutch war and the granting of the *parwana* by Shaista Khan in 1669[1] another period of peaceful trade began. The *parwana* of 1669 clarified the relationship between the Nawab and the East India Company, while the peace between he English and the Dutch gave an impetus to increased trading activities, especially as the two nations were naturally eager to recoup t[illegible] loss sustained during the last war. The restoration of peace was especially to the advantage of the English who were the weaker as a naval power. The dislocation in the arrival of ships from England during the war had put the English factors in Bengal into serious financial stringency. Now this difficulty was over. The treasure brought by the ships in 1669 was sufficient for the investment of 1670. For 1671 also the factors received sufficient funds so much so that they did not find it necessary to make use of the power given them by the Company to draw upto £10,000 by bills of exchange.[2] Similarly the stock position for 1672 was also satisfactory, for the three ships that arrived at the Bay of Bengal during 1671[3] brought £11,500 in commodities and £30,000 in bullion. Besides, the factors were also authorised to raise from £10,000 to £12,000 by bills of exchange, if necessary.[4]

Under these favourable circumstances the English factors in Bengal considerably extended their investments both at Kasimbazar and Patna. The Company were also eager to compete successfully in the European market by supplying an improved type of silk, and, for procuring that, they sent out a factor, Edward Littleton, and a writer, John Byam, to be station-

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1. For Shaista Khan's relation with the English East India Company upto 1669 see Ali, M.M., "Nawab Shaista Khan and the English East India Company's Trade in Bengal, 1664-1669," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dec. 1965 pp. 85—112.
2. 3 Misc. 140 ; *E.F.I.*, 1670-77, p. 332.
3. These were the *East India Merchant*, the *Sampson* and the *Bombay Merchant*. *See infra*, p. 15.
4. Desp. to Fort, 29 Nov., 1670, 4. L. B. 391; *E.F.I.*, 1670-77, p. 333.

ed at Kasimbazar as they were "well skilled in silk." Two silk dyers, Thomas Amos and John Naylor, were also sent for the same purpose.[1] Saltpetre investment at Patna was also much extended, and it was expected that from 800 to 1,000 tons of the best saltpetre should yearly be sent to England.[2] At other places also the investment was proportionately increased. In fact the Company's business was so enlarged that both at Kasimbazar and Dacca the factors were faced with the problem of lack of accomodation for the increased quantity of goods.[3]

In 1670, the first year after the new *parwana* came into operation, four of the Company's ships, the *Zante*, the *Happy Entrance*, the *Rainbow* and the *Coast Frigate*, arrived at Balasore. These were laden with the goods procured in Bengal and were despatched towards the end of that year.[4] No hindrance was placed by the Nawab's officials upon the procurement and despatch of these goods, nor was there any levy of customs over and above the sum of Rs. 3,000/- stipulated in the *parwana.* The only problem which the factors faced was the transshipment of the huge quantity of goods from Hugli, where these were brought from Patna, Kasimbazar, Dacca and all other places, to Balasore, where the ships anchored. Attempts were, however, made to induce the captains to take the ships upto Hugli ; but as the river was not chartered and measured they did not agree to do so.[5] The same problem of transsshipment of goods from Hugli to Balasore persisted in the following year when it took about four months, from August to the end of November, to lade the three homeward ships, the *East India Merchant*, the *Sampson*, and the *Bombay Merchant.*[6] The chief commodities taken away by these ships were saltpetre, taffatis, raw silk, sannoes (salus), cotton yarn, turmeric, tincall, and "dusuttees' or coarse sail-cloth. Of these saltpetre formed the bulk and about 11,000 bags of that commodity alone were shipped from Bengal during the year 1671.[7] Besides the problem of transshipment of goods from Hugli to Balasore, the factors were also much handicapped by excessive rains and floods in 1671 and 1672. In 1671 so violent was the winds and floods at Patna that the factor, Job Charnock, had

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*, 4 L. B. 410, 402 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 333.
3. Kas. letter, 1 Nov. 1671, & Dac. letter, 22 Dec., 1671,7 Hug. 12, 22; *E.F.I.*,1670-77, pp, 336, 337.
4. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 329.
5. *Ibid.*
6. The vessels engaged for the transshipment of goods from Hugli to Balasore at this period were two pinnaces, the *Madras* and the *Diligence*, two sloops, the *Good Hope* and the *John*, and a number of hired country cargo boats.
7. Bagnall's letter, 19, 24 & 30 Oct., 2, 7, 11, 22, 24 & 28 Nov., 1671, 7 Hug. 5-7, 9, 10, 13, 15-21 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, pp. 334-335.

great difficulty in saving the saltpetre from their violence.[1] At Kasimbazar the floods also made silk dear by destroying most of the mulberry trees. Nonetheless the factor there succeeded in getting ready for shipment 25,000 taffatis, "some of which came out cheaper than ever."[2]

A real trouble for the English was created by the Dutch who, taking advantage of the peaceful conditions, intensified their trading activities in Bengal. They embarassed the English position by paying the usual customs on all goods that they exported and by offering higher considerations to the manufactureres and labourers. This not only compromised the image of the English to the Nawab but also threatened their investment prospects, for the manufacturers were naturally more inclined to sell their goods to those who offered the higher price, and the weavers and other labourers were eager to work for the Dutch. The Dutch competition reached such a stage that towards the end of 1670 John March, the English factor at Kasimbazar, asked for more peons in order to keep a close watch upon the weavers and to prevent them from disposing of their cloth for which advances had been made, and also to see that they did not enter the service of the Dutch who, as March wrote, had "not been wanting in their endeavours to take some of them off." [3]

The Dutch competition was, in a way, a concommitant of the increased commercial activities of the time. It did not create any complication in the relation of the English with the local authorities. An aspect of the enlarged trade operations of he English themselves, however, involved them in some troubles. Ever since the end of the war with the Dutch the English East India Company had been endeavouring to import and sell as much English products as possible in Bengal. In fact a substantial part of the stock supplied to Bengal was made up of English commodities.[4] The Company expected that the import of the English goods in Bengal should also be exempt from the payment of any customs. It is to be noted that the Imperial *farman* of 1650 and the subsequent *parwanas* based upon it applied only to the export trade. Even Shaista Khan's *parwana* of 1669, which allowed the English to trade customs-free in lieu of the annual payment of 3,000 rupees, did not make any specific mention of this aspect of the Company's business presumably because it was very negligible at that time. To that extent, however, the *parwana* was vague as well as wide, and the English

1. Pat. letter, 26 Oct. 1671, 7 Hug. 7, 8 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 335 ; also Khan, Shafaat Ahmad, *John Marshall in India*, Oxford, 1927, pp. 125-7.
2. Vincent's letter, 1 Nov. 1671, 7 Hug. 10 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 333.
3. 3 Misc. 141 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 331.
4. *Supra*, p. 14.

claimed that their privilege of customs-free trade covered the import trade as well. As against this calim Malik Kasim, the governor of Hugli,[1] maintained that neither the Imperial *farman* nor the subsequent *parwanas* envisaged this aspect of the Company's business and that therefore their privilege did not embrace the import of goods from outside. Early in January 1672 he refused to pass the English goods which were brought by the ships in 1671 and which were now brought to Hugli from Balasore by the Company's boats.[2] He even demanded an account of the goods and one of his officials even brought a boat ashore for that purpose.[3] The factors resisted this and in course of doing so they even went to the length of applying force and beating the official who was compelled to let the boat go.[4] Such highhandedness of the foreign traders naturally roused the displeasure of the governor who, however, only asked them to render an account of the goods or to substantiate their claim to the privilege by producing, within ten days, the Emperor's *farman* or the *parwanas* granted by Shaista Khan's predecessors.[5] In reply the factors stated that the *farman* was at Surat and the *parwanas* at one of the other Bengal stations, and that therefore they could not guarantee their production within the ten days.[6] They further stated that Shaista Khan's *parwana* (of 1669) on which they relied for their freedom from the payment of customs and other dues, was sufficient authority for Malik Kasim, as he was an officer of the Nawab and had, by virtue of it, been passing their goods during the past few years.[7] The factors' contention that the Imperial *farman* could not be produced because it was at Surat does not appear to be correct ; for they had, in fact, obtained a copy of the *farman* in 1668 but they had then refrained themselves from showing it to the Nawab because there was the mention of the payment of customs in it.[8] A similar realisation of the weakness of their position vis-a-vis the earlier documents might have led them to give this evasive reply and to insist upon a wide construction of the *parwana*. The difficulty was resolved for the time being, however, by the good sense of Joseph Hall, a member of the Bengal Council, who visited the governor with a "small present" towards the end of the month and obtained his permission for the goods to proceed towards Dacca and elsewhere.[9]

1. Malik Kasim was the son of Malik Beg, a former governor at Balasore, and had held office since 1668.
2. Bagnall's letter to Clavell, 9 January 1672, 7 Hug. 24-25 ; *E.F.I.*, 1670-77, p. 348.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 346.
8. Bengal letter to Surat, 20 Oct. 1668, *E. F. I.*, 1668-69, p. 166.
9. 7 Hug. 27-29 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 348

Things went on smoothly for a time. But soon the governor renewed his claim of customs on the imported goods.[1] The factors alleged in their correspondence with the home authorities that this he did because he wanted that the goods were sold to him at his own rates.[2] They also suspected that the trouble was instigatedby the Dutch who paid in customs between 30,000 and 40,000 rupees a year, "as against an annual sum of Rs. 3,000 and the usual small presents to the Governor and his officers, paid by the English."[3]

The allegation of the governor's desire to monopolise the import trade appears to be unfounded. There was no incentive for him to do so, for as yet there was no great demand in Bengal for the English goods. As the factors themselves admitted in their correspondence, they had to barter at Balasore, in default of sale, a large quantity of lead and broadcloth at a discount of 20 per cent., for ginghams and other calicoes. They further stated that the English broadcloth that had reached Patna via Agra had also no sale on account of the badness of the market there and at all other places in Bengal. Consequently the factors asked the Company to send no more broadcloth for the next one or two years.[4] The real reason for his interference with the import of goods by the Company was his strict construction of Shaista Khan's *parwana* of 1669 and the previous grants which, according to him, did not apply to the import of goods. Besides this, he had probably also a specific ground for his action. The Emperor and the Nawab, we are told, had been in hostility with the local rajas and zamindars and had, for that reason, forbidden the disposal of lead and other military stores such as brimstone or ironguns brought by the foreign merchants except to themselves or by their leave.[5] In endeavouring to take an account of the goods imported by the English Malik Kasim might have been influenced by such military considerations.

Nor was the allegation of the Dutch instigation well grounded ; for about the same time Malik Kasim and the Dutch fell out over a monetary transaction. The facts of the dispute were that Baburam, the chief Brahman of the Dutch at Hugli, had, as servant to the Dutch, borrowed at interest a sum of Rs. 30,000 from Malik Kasim. Baburam died suddenly. He also

1. Charles Fawcett refers to the governor's claim to customs in general terms suggesting that he was interfering with both the export and the import trade (*E. F. I.*,1670-77, p. 346). But a careful perusal of even those documents that are summarised by him and specially a comparison of his texts at pages 345 and 348-349 leaves no room for doubt that the controversy arose over the import trade alone.
2. 4 Hug. 5 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 335.
3. 4 Hug. 5-6 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 346.
4. 4 Hug. 4 ; *E. F. I.*,1670--77, p. 345.
5. *Ibid.*

owed the Dutch a similar amount. The latter got hold of the widow of the deceased Baburam and forcibly realised from her a sum of Rs. 13, 000. Two days afterwards the unfortunate woman died, either because of the shame she felt, or because of the wounds she had sustained in being beaten. Malik Kasim now took up the matter and forced the Dutch to pay an amount of Rs. 28,000 as part of the debt owed by the deceased Brahman to him.[1] The latter appealed to Nawab Shaista Khan against this action of Malik Kasim. The English also now thought it timely to present their complaint to the Nawab against what they considered Malik Kasim's unauthorised interference with their trade, and to join the Dutch in their endeavour to oust Malik Kasim from his post. Accordingly John Smith, the English factor at Dacca, working under instruction from the Chief and Council at Hugli, presented the case of the English before the Nawab.[2] On receipt of these complaints Shaista Khan summoned Malik Kasim to Dacca where he arrived towards the end of April. The Nawab dealt with the two cases separately. So far as the case of the English was concerned he decided to stand by his commitment of allowing the English complete freedom of trade in lieu of their annual payment of the Rs. 3,000 as laid down in the *parwana* of 1669. He realised however that the *parwana* was vague and susceptible to different interpretations. Hence, in June 1672, he granted the English two new *Parwanas*, one for "friendship" and the other for "free trade". The latter specifically mentioned the exemption of the English from the payment of customs on all goods imported into or exported from his dominions, ordered help to be given for the recovery of their loans, free passage of the boats owned or hired by them, and prohibited all impediments or hindrance to their trade.[3] Malik Kasim also agreed to pay back whatever amount he had received from the English on this account.[4] As regards the appeal of the Dutch, Shaista Khan decided the case in their favour, disapproving the action of Malik Kasim and ordering for his removal from that place.[5] Thus Shaista Khan was just and consistent in his attitude towards the foreign traders.

The controversy with Malik Kasim arose, as we have seen, over the question of the import of goods in Bengal. There was no impediment to the Company's investment for and procurement of goods and these progressed as usual. The new governor of Hugli, Aziz Beg, was reported to be "very

1. *E F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 347.
2. *Ibid.*
3. 7 Hug. 74 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 349.
4. Dacca letter, 24 June and 11 July 1672, 7 Hug. 77, 79 ; 3 Misc. 170 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 351.
5. Dacca letter, 17 July 1672, 7 Hug. 81 ; *ibid.*

quiett and civill" and he assured the English of his help in their trade in Bengal.[1] At Kasimbazar "trade proceeded quietly," we are told, under the aid of a friendly governor, Mohammad Murad.[2] The factors there duly received the various consignments of treasure sent up from Hugli.[3] They also raised "considerable" funds at interest or on bills of exchange, and sent "large sums" to Dacca and Patna.[4] At the former place the factors invested about 50,000 rupees in procuring goods, principlally cloth, for that year's shipping.[5] Some concern was caused by the Nawab's decision that year to realise from the weavers there a tax of 2 pice in a rupee on each piece of cloth, instead of the previous practice of taking from them the fixed annual sum of 1,500 rupees.[6] This measure was expected to bring an increased revenue to the Nawab ; but the weavers, quite naturally, applied for the withdrawal of it. The English factors feared that the realisation of the new tax would involve a detailed checking of the cloths and would thus cause delay in their delivery. They also feared that similar demands might even be made upon the English and the Dutch. The factors therefore supported the cause of the weavers. The Nawab was good enough to make a special concession in favour of the English in that the cloths purchased by them were to be exempt from the new tax.[7] Both at Dacca and Kasimbazar, however, trade was much hampered by heavy rains and floods which, besides delaying the despatch of goods to Hugli, made silk scarce and dear by destroying most of the mulberry trees.[8]

It was only at Patna, which was outside the jurisdiction of Shaista Khan, that there was some interference with the Company's free procurement of goods. There the Nawab, Ibrahim Khan, reportedly insisted upon both the Dutch and the English merchants to purchase from him a quantity of decayed saffron "at about double its real value." This the English factors were obliged to do before they could obtain the permits for despatching their goods to Hugli.[9] To avoid such interference in future Job Charnock, the Company's chief factor at Patna, suggested the necessity of sending "an able vaqueel" to the Mughal court for obtaining redress from the Emperor.[10]

1. Dacca letter, 24 July 1672, 7 Hug. 81-82 ; *ibid.*
2. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 352.
3. Kasimbazar letter, 9 Feb., 14 March, 17 May and 9 Oct., 1672, 7 Hug. 33, 38, 60, 93 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 353.
4. Kasimbazar letter, 10 April, 17 May, 6 & 29 Aug., 1672, 7 Hug. 58, 60, 83, 87; *ibid.*
5. 4 Hug. 8 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 352.
6. Dacca letter, 24 June 1672, 7 Hug. 77 ; 4 Hug. 8 ; *ibid.*, pp. 351-352.
7. 7 Hug. 88 ; *ibid.*, p. 352.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Patna letter, 3 & 14 June and 19 Sept., 1672, 7 Hug. 66, 91-92 ; 4 Hug. 8-9 ; *ibid.*, p. 353.
10. 7 Hug. 93 ; *ibid.*, p. 354.

The Bengal council accepted the suggestion,[1] but no such appeal appears to have been made to the Emperor for the time being.

Inspite of the inclement weather and the rather petty annoyance caused by the Nawab of Patna, the Company had a good business in Bengal during this year. Between July and September as many as six ships, the largest number since the beginning of the English trade in Bengal, arrived at Balasore.[2] More significant than the number was the fact that one of these ships, the *Rebecca*, a vessel of 200 tons, sailed for the first time upto Hugli and safely returned with the goods to Balasore.[3] Regular sailing upto Hugli was not yet found suitable and the factors obtained additional sloops from Masulipatam for the transport of goods between Hugli and Balasore.[4] The factors experienced some difficulty in procuring sufficeint goods to lade the unusually large number of ships, especially as another war with the Dutch had broken out (17 March 1672) and it was thought expedient to send the ships together for mutual assistance and support. The ships left Balasore about 20 December with cargoes valued at Rs. 547,7218.[5]

The (third) Anglo-Dutch war continued from 17 March 1672 to 9th February 1674. As in the case of the last war between the two nations, this time also the Nawab enforced neutrality within his dominions. As a result there was no loss to the Company on account of any capture by the Dutch, for whatever goods the English factors obtained from up-country, they kept these stored at Hugli.[6] During the continuance of the war, however, their trade operations were much hampered on account of the non-arrival of ships and the consequent dearth of capital. The latter difficulty was all the more acute because the factors' resources were almost completely exhausted in providing cargo for as many as six ships at the end of 1672. There was also no possibility of obtaining any funds from the Dutch by bills of exchange. Added to these was the difficulty and uncertainty of communications with the headquarters at Madras and other factories outside Bengal. Under these circumstances the business of the English factors was confined from the beginning of 1673 to the middle of 1674 to the selling of the goods brought by the last ships and, with the sale proceeds and such other amount as they could locally raise, to procure goods, especilly the Patna saltpetre, for any ships that might unexpectedly arrive.

1. 4 Hug. 9 ; *ibid.*
2. These were the *Rebecea*, the *Johanna*, the *Loyal Merchant*, the *Berkeley Castle*, the *Anne* and the *Barnadiston*.
3. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 342.
4. 7 Hug. 53 ; *ibid.*, p. 343.
5. 4 Hug. 14, 16, 18, 20 ; *ibid.*
6. Hugli letter, 31 March and Balasore letter, 28 December, 1674, 4 Hug. 177 and 23 ; *ibid.*, p. 379.

During this troublous period, however, the factors were engaged in an unwholesome animosity with Malik Kasim, the former governor of Hugli. The latter, after his removal from Hugli, endeavoured to get the governorship of Balasore which had then fallen vacant. Although Shaista Khan's *parwana* of 1672 had settled the point of dispute between Malik Kasim and the English factors, the latter could not overcome their misgivings about him. Hence they tried, in alliance with the Dutch, to prevent his coming as governor of Balsore.[1] Malik Kasim, however, succeeded in overcoming their opposition and in obtaining the post towards the end of 1672 though, on account of the fierce opposition of the Dutch, he could not join his new post till near the end of March, 1673.[2] With such a background the relation between the English factors and Malik Kasim, now the administrator of the chief port on the Bengal coast, could not be expected to be cordial. On his arrival, however, Malik Kasim professed his friendliness. The English factors, on the other hand, did not give up their design to oust him from that place.Their attitude and manoeuvres in this respect are revealed in their communications to their masters and others in which they preferred a series of allegations against him. As these communications have sometimes been taken to reflect the Nawab's dealings with the foreign merchants, it is necessary to deal with them in some detail and to set them in their proper perspective. The factors wrote to their masters at home that Malik Kasim was "an insolent, proud, abusive rascall" and accused him of having "used many ways to extort money from the inhabitants" and of having "put a stop to allmost the whole trade of the towne, so that some Dutch freemen and Portuguese that came from China and other parts are not able to sell their [goods] to the merchants but will in the end be forced to sell all to the governor."[3] The factors further alleged that neither the poor nor the rich at Balasore were happy with him and that he had so "curbed" the town that the private individuals were unable to trade.[4] Besides writing thus to the home authorities, the factors also informed the Nawab's *diwan* that the port was going to be ruined under Malik Kasim's rule.[5] In order to bring home their contention they cited, rather strangely, the instances of the capture of a Gujarat vessel by the Danes and of a French ship named the *Flamand* by the Dutch off the coast of Balasore. They further emphasised

1. Dacca letter, 24 July 1672, 7 Hug. 81-82 and Balasore letter, 3 April 1673, 4 Hug. 49 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, pp, 351 and 361.
2. Balasore letter, 31 March, 1673, 4 Hug. 44 ; *ibid.*, p. 360.
3. Balasore letter, 3 April 1673, *op. cit.*, and Balasore letter to the Fort St. George, 4 June 1673, 4 Hug. 54 ; *ibid.*, p. 361.
4. Balasore letter to the Fort, 8 and 27 August 1673, 4 Hug. 77, 82 ; and Balasore letter, 26 Sept. 1773, 4 Hug. 87 ; *ibid.*
5. Bal. letter, 5 Sept., 1673, 4 Hug. 84-85 ; *ibid.*

that so long as he remained in charge of that port no strangers could hope their ships would be safe.[1]

The last allegation tends to convey the impression as if Malik Kasim had a hand in the capture of the ships. But the real story was told by the factors in their communications to their masters dated 15 and 27 June, 7 July, 1, 8 and 27 August 1673. The factors stated that the Gujarat vessel was captured by the Danes as a measure of reprisal for some wrongs done by the Nawab of Orissa (Safshikan Khan), and that the French ship, the *Flamand*, was wrongfully captured by the Dutch "after three houres fight" and inspite of Malik Kasim's efforts to protect the French.[2] It is therefore difficult to see how the foreign merchants could not be sure of the safety of their ships as long as Malik Kasim remained the governor of Balasore. In fact, the inconsistency between the factors' allegation and their actual narration of the events connected with the capture of the ships only shows that they were twisting every fact to bring Malik Kasim into disrepute, and therefore into disfavour at court, in order to cause his removal from Balasore. The tendentious nature of their allegations is all the more apparent from the fact that while they were in the habit of repeatedly reporting to their masters any actual wrong done to the Company's trade, they did not mention even a single instance of Malik Kasim's interference with the Company's trade in this series of allegations, but confined themselves to the narration of his alleged interference with the trade of the Dutch and the Portuguese. Even if it is accepted that he did really interfere with the latter's sale of goods, this should not have been regarded as prejudicial to the interests of the English merchants, for the latter's import of goods was exempt from the payment of any customs according to the *parwana* of 1672, and this exemption did not apply to the goods imported by the other nations.[3] A more direct proof of the *mala fide* of the factors' allegation is to be found in the fact that only a few days after Malik Kasim's assumption of office at Balasore (when he could not have given any cause of complaint against him, including his alleged ill-treatment of the Dutch and the Portuguese), they instructed Elwes, the factor at Dacca, to instigate against Malik Kasim the former governor of Murshidabad, Muhammad Reza, who was understood to be

1. *Ibid.*
2. 4 Hug. 62, 65, 73, 75, 79, 82, *ibid.*, p. 363.
3. Charles Fawcett, the editor of he English factory records of this period, uncritically accepts the allegations of the factors and concludes that their fears were justified(*E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 361). He even does not compare the factors' allegation regarding the safety of the foreign ships at Balasore with their own narration of events connected with the capture of the ships which he himself reproduces at his page 363 and to which he refers his readers at page 361 (see *ibid.*, pp. 361 and 363).

an aspirant after the governorship of Balasore.[1] A little later they suggested to the Dacca factor that Boremul [Bir Mal], the former governor of Balasore, should also be encouraged to try for that post, assuring that there would not be wanting people at Balasore to complain against Malik Kasm.[2] All these show that the English factors were merely continuing their hostility against Malik Kasim which had originated at Hugli and which ought to have come to an end with the granting of Shaista Khan's *parwana* of 1672. Malik Kasim, however, rose equal to the occasion. He outmanoeuvred his adversaries who, before long, had to lament that he "hath the advantage of us in advices, having the king's conveyance which goes in halfe the time that we can send, and the advantage of his own pen to represent to the Nabob all things in what colours he pleases."[3] In fact Malik Kasim emerged from the conflict stronger than ever. As against the intrigues of the English he not only maintained his position at Balasore, but also got control over Hugli by obtaining, in October 1674, the governorship of that place in favour of his son Malik Zindi.[4]

The efforts of the factors to sell the goods brought by the ships in 1672 did not also meet with much success. This was because there was practically no demand for the English goods, especially the broadcloth, in Bengal and other places. Both in 1673 and 1674 the factors stated that the Company's warehouses were full of cloth from Europe and the country merchants had so much of it on their hands that they would not take any more.[5] At Balasore Khemchand, a Hindu merchant, alone had rupees 3,000 worth. Some of the cloth, lead and copper plates were bartered to another merchant, Raghunath, for muslins to be delivered at Dacca.[6] At Hugli cloth had been lying "for several years and become damaged". As such the factor there was ordered to dispose of it for whatever he could get,or to try to barter it for saltpetre.[7] The Kasimbazar factory had been authorised to sell the goods at low rates to raise cash for its expenses;[8] while the Dacca factor (Elwes) was asked to get in all the goods remaining with the people to whom they had been distributed for sale and to send them down to Hugli where there were more warehousing facilities.[9] (These informations once again reveal the untrustworthiness of the factors' allegations : there was really no

1. Balasore letter to Kasimbazar and Dacca, 3 April 1673, 4 Hug. 47, 48-49 ; *ibid.*, p. 361.
2. *E, F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 361.
3. Balasore letter, 1 and 27 Aug. 1673, 4 Hug. 75, 82, *ibid.*, p. 362.
4. Balasore letter, 7 Oct. & 28 Dec. 1674, 4 Hug. 8, 23 ; *ibid.*, p. 377.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 358 and 372-373.
6. Bal. let., 3 March and 11 April, 1673, 4 Hug. 42, 49; *ibid.*, p. 358.
7. Bal. let., 27 June and 28 July 1673, 4 Hug. 66, 73 ; *ibid.*
8. Hug. let., 22 Nov., 1673, 4 Hug. 93-94 ; *ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*

incentive for Malik Kasim to monopolise the business in the goods brought by the English Company, nor were the native merchants debarred from carrying on trade with the foreign merchants.) In 1674 the market was further flooded by the goods captured by the Dutch who not only sold them at much cheaper rates, but also insultingly exhibited them as trophies of their victory.[1] Even for this dullness of the market the factors, in their usual fashion, found fault with the Nawab's government and attributed the lack of demand for the English goods to the "parsimonious nature" of the Mughal officials, and reported to their masters that there was no hope of selling broadcloth, unless "some Young Nabob or a son of the Kings come to succeed in Nabob of Dacca."[2]

The dearth of sale of the English goods and the non-arrival of ships caused an acute shortage of funds for the factors. The investments at Dacca and Ksimbazar were suspended,[3] but, as saltpetre was badly needed in Europe all the available funds were diverted to Patna to keep up the saltpetre investments there. Thus early in 1673 Job Charnock was supplied with a sum of 50,000 rupees, and towards the close of the year a further amount of 35,000 rupees, raised by bills of exchange, was made available to him.[4] He was also permitted to borrow money, if necessary, at interest.[5] The cash position improved a little in the early months of 1674 when about half of the broadcloth brought by the ships (in 1672) had either been sold for cash or bartered for other goods, and about 170 tons of lead had been sold.[6] The factors also succeeded in raising by bills of exchange an amount of ruppes 60,000.[7] In the meantime the war with the Dutch had ended on 9 February 1674 and three of the Company's ships, the *Advice,* the *Lancaster* and the *Phoenix*, arrived at Balasore between August and September, 1674. They brought with them goods and treasure worth 2,79,780 rupees (£27,978), besides permission to raise 2,00,000 (£20,000) on bills of exchange.[8] After the arrival of these ships the Dacca and Kasimbazar factors were instructed to resume their normal investments. Vincent at Kasimbazar was asked to supply a good quantity of raw silk, floretta yarn and black taffatis, whereas Elwes at Dacca was instructed to provide fine cossaes to the value of 15,000 rupees. And as the Company had forbidden

1. Bal. let., 4 July and 28 Dec., 1674, 4 Hug. 131 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 372-372.
2. 4 Hug. 121 ; *ibid.*, p. 373.
3. Bal. let., 16 March 1673 and Hug. let., 22 Nov. 1673, 4 Hug. 35 & 94 ; *ibid.*, p. 358.
4. Bal. let., 11 Feb. & 31 March, and Hug. let., 15, 21 & 24 Nov. 1673, 4 Hug. 249, 45, 91, 93, 95 ; *ibid.*, pp. 357, 358.
5. Hug. let., 14 January 1674, 4 Hug. 114 ; *ibid.*, pp, 358, 382.
6. *E. F. I..*, 1670-77, p, 373.
7. Hug. let., 31 March 1674, 4 Hug, 114; *ibid.*, p. 382.
8. *E. F. I.* ;. 1670-77, p. 382.

to send home any more south Indian saltpetre, which was of an inferior quality, Job Charnock at Patna was encouraged to procure as much saltpetre as possible.[1]

The records of the period do not show any interfernce with the factors' investments for and procurement of goods at Dacca and Kasimbazar. During the first half of 1674 hummums (a thick stout cloth) and fine muslins from Dacca, taffatis and silk from Kasimbazar, and saltpetre and tincal (borax) from Patna were brought to Balasore.[2] It was only at Patna that the factors had come across some trouble. There a new Nawab had succeeded Ibrahim Khan towards the end of 1673. The new viceroy wrote to the Emperor that the English carried on an extensive trade at Patna but that they paid no customs. In reply the Emperor asked him to see that the state was not harmed in any way. Thereupon the viceroy called upon the English and the Dutch merchants to prove that they paid customs at Hugli.[3] The English factors thought that a reference to Nawab Shaista Khan for obtaining a customs clearence certificate might complicate the matter. Hence they "confined themselves to sending to Charnock a receipt, obtained with some difficulty from the governor of Hugli, for the annual payment of Rs. 3,000 that they had made for many years past."[4] The Dutch, on the other hand, obtained a certificate from Nawab Shaista Khan to the effect that they paid customs regularly which amounted annually to 30,000 to 40,000 rupees.[5] In view, presumably, of this discrepancy between the Dutch and the English authentication of their respective cases the Patna authorities allowed the latter to move their saltpetre consignment to Hugli only on their undertaking to obtain, within four months, a *parwana* from Nawab Shaista Khan showing that the customs on the goods had been paid.[6] Throughout the months of October and November, 1674, five of the Company's small vessels were busy in lading the ships with the goods obtained from Patna, Dacca and Kasimbazar.[7] The ships left Balasore on 17 December 1674 with cargoes valued at rupees 246, 248.[8]

As has been noted,[9] the trouble at Patna in 1672 had induced Charnock to urge upon the Bengal Council the necessity of obtaining a *farman* from the Emperor. The demands of the new Viceroy of Patna in 1674

1. *Ibid.*, p. 374.
2. Hug. let., 31 March 1674, 4 Hug. 120 ; *ibid*, p. 373.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 374-375.
4. *Ibid.*, p, 375.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 368
8. *Ibid.*, p. 369.
9. *Supra.* p. 21.

further emphasised Charnock's plea. Hence, inspite of their having received no permission from the Madras Council to do so, Clavell and his council in Bengal authorised Charnock to send a *vakil* to the Emperor's court.[1] This Charnock did towards the middle of 1674. The *vakil*, we are told, nearly succeeded in obatining a favourable *farman* from the Emperor but for the intervention of an important courtier who argued ". . . if the English had used to trade custome free, they had a phyrmaund for it, and if they had a phyrmaund already, why need they have another."[2] Further progress of the negotiations was stopped, however, on account of the death of the *vakil* in the middle of 1675.[3] The remarks of the courtier as well as the Emperor's earlier instructions to the Patna Nawab asking him to see that the state was not harmed in any way suggest that till then the Emperor was not well aware of the nature and extent of the English and the Dutch Company's trade in the eastern part of his empire.

Meanwhile efforts were made to obtain a customs-clearance certaificate from Shaista Khan relating to the English Company's business at Patna. The grant of such a parwana was delayed, we are told, on account of the machinations of Malik Kasim.[4] Finally, however, Elwes and Harvey, the factors at Dacca, succeeded in obtaining the desired orders from Shaista Khan in the month of September, 1675.[5]

In the meantime the investments for 1675 progressed as usual in Bengal as well as at Patna. The sale of the goods brought by the last ships was, however, very slow. By the middle of April there were at Hugli alone some 4,000 maunds of unsold lead. Consequently Charnock at Patna was asked if he could find a market there for it by abating the normal price.[6] The lack of sale of the goods caused some shortfall in funds and this necessitated some abridgement in the investments at Dacca and Kasimbazar pending the arrival of ships with treasure.[7] As saltpetre was in great demand, every effort was made to keep up the progress of investments at Patna for which purpose the Agent and Council at Madras authorised the Bengal factors to raise money by taking loans at interest.[8] In July and August five ships, the *Anne*, the *Loyal Subject*, the *Success*, the *Unity* and the *Samuel and Henry* arrived at Balasore.[9] Immediately on the arrival of the first ship early in

1. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 375. The Company in its despatch of 13 March 1674 disapproved of the proposal to send a *vakil* to the Mughal court. (*Ibid*).
2. *Ibid.*, p. 410; Master's *Diary*, vol. I. pp. 490-95.
3. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 395.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 394.
5. Bal. let., 29 Sept. 1675, 4 Hug. 73 ; *ibid.*, p. 395.
6. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 387.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 389.

July Clavell and his council sent revised trade instructions to the different factories. Vincent at Kasimbazar was asked to procure as much silk as possible, but not to exceed the amount ordered by the Company. Charnock at Patna was asked to procure, besides saltpetre, tincal and turmeric and to send them down to Hugli.[1] The clearnce-certificate granted by Shaista Khan in September appears to have removed the trouble at Patna, for there is no mention of any interference with the despatch of goods from that place.[2] Already by the end of August fifteen boats laden with Patna saltpetre arrived at Hugli.[3] By 20 September 14,000 maunds of Patna saltpetre had been received at Hugli, and a further 5,500 maunds were ready at Patna.[4] By the end of November all the goods sent by Charnock were received at Balasore.[5] About the same time goods worth rupees 87,418 were also received from Kasimbazar.[6] With these goods the ships left Balasore sometime in December, 1675.

The stock brought by the ships in 1675 was stated to be £20,000 less than what the Company had intended for the Bengal factories.[7] Obviously a larger amount was kept at Madras by the Agent and Council there. Yet, what the ships brought was presumably sufficient for the investment of 1676 for in that year not much was heard about the shortage of funds.The chief interest of the year centered round the proceedings of Streynsham Master whom the Company had commissioned to investigate into the various irregularities in the Bengal factories, especilly in the squabbles and quarrels between Clavell, Hall and Vincent.For sometime past these servants of the Company in Bengal had been engaged in bitter conflicts and quarrels with one another over private trade affairs,over the maintenance of the Company's accounts, and over the question of their seniority and precedence in the Bengal Council. Master arrived in Bengal by one of the three ships, the *Eagle*, the *Falcon* and the *Surat Merchant*, which arrived at Balasore on 23 August 1676.[8] Master's proceedings, as recorded by himself,[9] reveal two sets of informations which reflect sufficiently on the factors' activities in Bengal as well as on their relation with the local authorities. In one set

1. *Ibid.*, p, 388.
2. Charles Fawcett, however, refers to the obstruction of the Company's trade by the Mughal officials (*E. F. I.* 1670-77, p.395). A comparison of the first and third paras of his texts at the same page makes it clear, however, that this "obstruction" had reference to the non-payment of the "Gautbarra" (*Ghat Bhara* or pierage) at the rate of rupees two per boat.
3. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 390.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 393.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 392.
7. Bal. let., 29 Set., 1675, 4 Hug. 73 ; *ibid.* pp. 391.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 400. Earlier, on 31 July, another ship, the *Johanna*,had arrived at Balasore.
9. *Diaries of Streynsham Master*, 2 vols., London, 1911.

of informations regarding mainly the trade of the company, it is recorded, *inter alia*, that the local merchants were loath to deal with the Company "because of the broadcloth and lead they were forced to take in part payment, complaining of the great quantities that were lying on their hands."[1] This once again confirms that there was no appreciable demand for the English goods and that the slowness of their sale was not really due to the obstruction by Malik Kasim or other Mughal officials. The local merchants were not debarred from dealing in the goods imported by the English on account of any official's intention to monopolise them. On the contrary, it was the factors who "forced" the local merchants to accept the English goods in part payment of the merchandise supplied to the latter. The highhandedness and irregular dealings of the English factors are all the more evident from the other set of informations which, but for the personal bickerings of the factors themselves, would not probably have come to light. These show that the chief of a factory occasionally resorted to beating and confinement of the local people in order to force them to fulfil their contract of supplying goods or to extract repayment of the money taken as advance or loan.[2] Such oppression sometimes exceeded its limits and the victim succumbed to his injuries. One of the major issues with which Master himself was to deal was the case of such a victim, Raghu Poddar, who died on account of excessive beating at the instance or connivance of Vincent, the factory chief at Kasimbazar. The actual beating was done by Anantaram, the factory broker. Master thought that such application of physical force in order to enforce contracts was justified by "the custom of the country" although there is very little evidence to support such an opinion. He also exonerated Vincent of complicity in the matter because no direct evidence to that effect was available.[3] But what is more noteworthy is that Master approved of Vincent's action in not handing over Anantaram to the local authorities to be dealt with by them and otherwise in hushing up the affair at the cost of rupees 13,000 for, as Vincent argued, a reference to the local authorities might have involved the factors in further expenses and trouble.[4]

This attitude of excluding the interposition of the local authoriries in matters which legitimately fell within their jurisdiction also underlay the factors' handling, in the same year, of another case known as the "De Soito Business".[5] The case had its origin in 1652 in which year a Protuguese

1. *Master's Diary*, Vol. I. pp. 303-304.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 345, 346, 348, 350, 351, 353, 358,371.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 153-54. See *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, pp. 402-404 for a good summary of the case.
4. *Master's Diary*, Vol. I. pp. 344, 345, 346-47, 350-51, 353-54, 358-59, 367.
5. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, pp. 413-14.

merchant at Hugli named Gomes de Soito had consigned to Persia a parcel of cinnamon on the Company's ship, the *Mayflower.* The Portuguese merchant died a little afterwards. His son, Pasqual, alleged that the goods had been sold for rupees 6,000 but that the English factors had not paid him the money excepting a sum of rupees 500 which was paid in 1657. After repeated unsuccessful efforts to realise the amount he applied, at last, to Nawab Shaista Khan in Novembr 1675, for the realisation of the money. The Qazi, to whom the case had been referred decided, in April 1676, in favour of Pasqual and awarded him rupees 5,300. "This conclusion." as Fawcewtt points out, "was quite a reasonable one";[1] yet the factor at Dacca, Harvey, represented to the Chief at Hugli that if the decision of the Qazi was allowed to stand, "there was an imminent prospect that other similar claims would be made against the Company".[2] Accordingly he was authorised to adopt such methods and to spend such amount as he thought fit to settle the matter.[3] By "extensive bribery" of the Nawab's officials, costing over rupees 9,000 (abut double the amount awarded by the Qazi in favour of Pasqual), Harvey succeeded in getting an order from the Nawab in June 1676 for a reexamination of the case at Balasore, "where the Company's influence was greater than at Dacca."[4] The matter appears to have been subsequently settled by the payment of ruppees 1,000 to Pasqual.[5] The case of Raghu Poddar and the "De Soito Business" show that the English factors' conduct of business was not always regular, that they were therefore eager to exclude the jurisdiction of the local authorities for fear of enquiry into their otherwise irregular activities, and that in order to secure the latter end they did not even hesitate to conceal a crime or to influence the course of the administration of justice. Incidentally, the preference shown for Balasore to Dacca for settling the "De Soito Business" also suggests that Malik Kasim's governorship at Balasore had not really jeopardised the position of the English at that place.

Although Master's investigations engrossed the attention of the factors, the procurement of goods for the ships progressed as usal. By the beginning of November goods from the different factories—saltpetre from Patna, taffatis and turmeric from Kasimbazar and cloth from Dacca were collected and brought down to Hugli for their despatch to Balasore. At

1. *Ibid.*, p. 414.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 422-23. For a detailed account of the affair see Richard Temple's "Story of the Mayflower and her cargo", *Master's Diary*, Vol. I., pp. 17-86.

this time the factors appear to have attempted to make good whatever time was lost in course of Master's proceedings by hastily despatching the boats to Balasore without proper passes. In fact John Byam, a senior writer of the factory at Hugli, went to the length of using force in an attempt to despatch a boat though it had no valid pass.[1] At this Malik Zindi, the governor of the place, stopped the passage of the Company's boats and also imprisoned some of the employees of the factory. He also demanded, presumably by way of a fine, a sum of rupees 500 over and above the usual yearly present of rupees 3,000.[2] In view of this difficulty the Bengal Council decided, on November 11, to mollify the governor. They sent him a small present of "five half-pieces of broadcloth" and ultimately succeeded in getting a withdrawal of the stoppage of the boats and the release of the persons who had been detained.[3] The Council also fined Byam of rupees 100 for his unseemly conduct.[4] Though Malik Zindi dropped the claim for the additional sum of rupees 500 and let the Company's boats go, he demanded, a few days afterwards, an immediate payment of the yearly present of rupees 3,000 alleging that he had received the Nawab's orders to realise the amount without dealy.[5] Whether the Nawab had actually ordered Malik Zindi to do so is not known. In view, however, of the fact that the year was nearing its end and the goods for that year were being shipped out of Bengal, Malik Zindi's action was not quite unreasonable although the due date for the payment of the yearly present, as the factors stated, fell on 25 December.[6] It was not before he imprisoned the factory *vakil* and stopped further passage of the boats that the factors gave in and made the payment on 2 December.[7]

A real trouble for the factors was a directive from Emperor Aurangzeb, received about that time by Shaista Khan, for the levy of customs at 2 per cent. on all the Company's goods.[8] As we have noted,[9] it was only towards the end of 1674 that the Emperor had come to know of the Company's extensive trade operations in the eastern part of his dominions. The Imperial *Farman* of 1650, granted by Shah Jahan, also contained the pro-

1. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 408 ; also *Master's Diary*, Vol. II. pp. 43-44.
2. *Master's Diary*, Vol. II., pp. 43-44. Master, however, vaguely refers to the affair and, without specifying any reason for Malik Zindi's action, states that he "endeavoured all he could to molest us and impede the Honourable Company's business by stopping our boats and seizing our goods and servants and detaineing them." (*Ibid.*)
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
6. *Ibid.*,
7. *Ibid.* ; also *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 409.
8. *Master's Diary*, Vol. II., pp. 68-69.
9. *Supra*, pp. 26-27

vision for the payment of customs by the Company. The practice of their trading custom-free in Bengal in lieu of the yearly payment of rupees 3,000 was an arrangement made between the Nawab and the factors. Obviously the Emperor was unaware of this. Hence his orders for the levy of customs were not unnatural. The matter had really originated from the Patna viceroy's report about the Company's trade in those parts of the empire and the consequent sending of a *vakil* by the factors to the Imerial court for obtaining a fresh *farman*. Be that as it may, Shaista Khan, who had been strictly adhering to his *parwana* of 1669 in dealing with the English Company, was somewhat unnerved on the receipt of the Imperial orders. He immediately issued instructions to the governors of Hugli and Balasore for giving effect to the Imperial orders.[1] Fitch Nedham, the factor who was then in charge of the Dacca factory, succeeded by bribing the Nawab's officials in stopping the despatch of the instructions for the levy of customs for seven days. As a result they were received by Malik Zindi on the 15th of December, although originally they were ready for despatch on the 3rd.[2] On the other hand Master and the Bengal Council sent, on 11 December, three good Persian horses as present to the Nawab, thinking that the trouble was probably due to the failure to give him the presents he had long been promised.[3] Master also represented to the Company the urgent need for obtaining an Imperial *farman* confirming the privileges under which the Company had been trading in Bengal.[4] The respite provided by Nedham's action had, however, enabled the factors at Hugli to despatch sufficient quantity of goods to Balasore ; and the four ships were laden with those goods and were sent off from Balasore on 21 and 31 December.[5]

The Imperial orders for the levying of customs did not therefore affect the shipping of goods for 1676. Immediately on receipt of the instructions to levy customs, we are told, Malik Zindi refused to allow further transshipment of goods to Balasore ; and for the first few months of 1677 he continued to insist upon the payment of customs and put various pressures upon the factors, besides detaining their goods.[6] As this was the first half of the year during which the factors were principally engaged in making investments rather than in collecting goods and sending them down to Balasore, whatever goods that Malik Zindi was said to have detained were really those

1. *Master's Diary*, Vol. II., pp. 68-69.
2. 1 Hug. 2 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 409.
3. *Master's Diary*, Vol. I., p. 399 and Vol. II., pp. 45, 68, 73, 78.
4. *Ibid.* Vol. I., pp. 490-95.
5. *Ibid.*, Vol. II. pp., 70, 90-92, 93, 109.
6. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 417.

that were left over at Hugli after the ships had left Balasore towards the end of the last year. In view, however, of the difficulties with which the Company's trade in Bengal was now beset, the Madras Council approved, in February 1677, of Master's suggestion to obtain a new *farman* from the Emperor and authorised Clavell and his Council in Bengal to adopt the best course they could do to procure it.[1] Meanwhile the Bengal Council also sent a representation to Shaista Khan. This elicited a favourable response. He referred the question back to the Emperor, probably informing him in detail about the circumstances of the English Company's trade in Bengal ; and on 5 May 1677 he issued orders to all his officers asking them to suspend the levy of customs till the Emperor's further instructions on the matter were received.[2]

The Nawab's orders brought to an end the complications that had been caused by the Imperial directive. A conflict of a new kind, however, soon arose between Malik Zindi and the factors. This concerned the application of Richard Mosley, a dyer at Kasimbazar, for the recovery of a sum of rupees 17,000 from the factors on account of the loss of a part of the cargo of the *Mayflower*[3] to which Mosley's Muhammadan wife was entitled. In this matter Mosley was supported by John Norton, an English free trader at Hugli. The two men ultimately obtained Malik Zindi's permission for proceeding to Dacca in order to pursue the claim before the Nawab. Thereupon Reade, the factory chief at Hugli, had Mosley and Norton arrested and detained as prisoners in the factory.[4] Malik Zindi demanded their release, but Reade refused it on the ground that Mosley was an Englishman and a servant of the Company.[5] Such action of the factors was obviously an obstruction to the administration of justice and at last Malik Zindi sent his men to the factory who forcibly recovered the two persons and brought them to the governor. In the process, however, the factory gates were damaged and in the scuffle Reade received an injury on his shoulder.[6] This application of force by the governor gave an opportunity to the factors for making a counter-claim against him and immediately they made a complaint to the Emperor's *diwan* and *bakhshi* (pay-master) at Hugli alleging that they had suffered a loss of rupees 90,0C0 on account of treasure and pro-

1. *Ibid.*, p. 416.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 417.,
3. Mentioned in connection with the "De Soito Business", *supra*, p. 30.
4. 1 Hug. 9 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 418.
5. Reade referred the matter to the Bay Council which, in turn, referred it to the Madras Council. The latter asked the Bengal factors to send both Mosley and Norton to Madras.
6. 1 Hug. 13 ; *ibid.*, p. 419.

perty taken away by Malik Zindi's men.[1] Obviously the damages claimed were exaggerated, for in their correspondence with their masters the factors did not make mention of any such loss of property; nor was it likely, in view of the general shortage of funds, that the factory possessed so much wealth in it. The preferment of the counterclaim and the sending of the complaint to Dacca for its placement before the Nawab toned down Malik Zindi who, before long, made several overtures for compromise, offering to give the two men back if only the factors agreed to drop their complaint at Dacca.[2] For sometime Reade maintained an attitude of defiance; but when Mosley and Norton once again petitioned to be allowed to go to Dacca to place their claim as well before the Nawab,[3] Reade and his associates came round to an attitude of compromise which was effected, in November 1677, through the good offices of Malik Kasim, Malik Zindi's father and the governor of Balasore. Mosley and Norton were surrendered to the factory and Malik Zindi undertook to mend the factory gates. Consequently the factors also agreed to drop their complaint against him and not to pursue the matter at Dacca.[4] The episode is important as it further shows that the factors were not always above question in their trade dealings with others and that they often resisted the proper adjudication of claims against them. It also illustrates the awe in which Shaista Khan was held by his high officials because of his administration of even-handed justice inrrespective of foreigners and his own men.

While Reade and his associates were engaged in the quarrel with Malik Zindi, the investments for and the procurement of goods at the different factories had been in progress. Meanwhile Shaista Khan's orders of 5 May 1677 for the continuation of the Companys' privileges had removed whatever uncertainties caused by the Imperial orders for the levy of customs and had restored complete normalcy in the English factors' trading activities. Thus at Kasimbazar, which had already sent down to Hugli a large quantity of goods obtained against last year's investment, a fresh contract had been made for the supply of 280 bales of silken goods within the year of 1677.[5] The tresasures sent to the mint were also received back, "without interruption," after they had been converted into "large sums in rupees and gold mohurs" so that by April and May the factors

1. 1 Hug. 14 ; *ibid.*
2. 1 Hug. 22 ; *ibid.*
3. 1 Hug. 29, 30 ; *ibid.*, p. 427.
4. 1 Hug. 36 ; *ibid.*, p. 429. Norton died of illness on 6 November, while Mosley was sent to Mardras to answer for his conduct before the Agent and Council there.
5. 1 Kas. 12, 13, 16, 18 ; entries of 8 & 12 April, 5 May and 7 June ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 421.

were able to repay the money that had been borrowed at interest.[1] Similarly progress was also made in the saltpetre investment at Patna. There Charnock was supplied with a cash of rupees 1,000 from Kasimbazar and also a letter of credit for whatever amount he needed.[2] Later he also drew a bill for rupees 1,850 on Hugli which was accepted in June.[3] The Dacca factory locally borrowed rupees 10,000 in order to carry on its investments.[4]

Between 27 July and 3 September three ships, the *Bengal Merchant*, the *Caesar* and the *New London*, arrived at Balasore.[5] The Company had sent out for the Bengal factories £55,000 in bullion and £17,334 in goods.[6] Most of the treasures and goods were sent up to Hugli and thence to Kasimbazar, Patna and Dacca, for sale and investments.[7] At first Malik Zindi, with whom Reade's quarrel over Mosley and Norton had not yet been settled, tried to hinder the passage of the treasures and the goods but, after sometime, he issued passes for the boats and on 23 August 14 chests of treasure were sent off to Kasimbazar.[8] After that date "there appears to have been no further trouble about sending goods away or receiving them from elsewhere."[9] As in the last year, this year also Malik Zindi demanded an early payment of the yearly present of rupees 3,000. The factors paid the amount in order to avoid any stoppage of their boats.[10]

The bulk of the treasure sent up to Kasimbazar was meant for the Patna factory for investment there, for the Company had raised their demand for saltpetre from 600 to 1000 tons.[11] The investments at the different factories were somewhat hampered by the difficulty in selling the treasure. This was due to the fact that the Emperor had imposed in 1677 a mintage of 5 per cent on all private persons who wanted to have their treasures minted at the royal mints.[12] On account of this new charge the merchants were unwilling to buy the treasure. They were also unwilling to accept *cruzados* (a kind of Protuguese coins), which formed a great part of the treasures brought by the ships in 1677, because it was difficult to convert them into the local coins.[13] The factors indeed applied to the Nawab's as well as the

1. 1 Kas. 7-8 ; *ibid.*
2. 1 Kas. 12, 13, 17, 18 ; *ibid.*
3. 1 Hug. 20 ; *ibid.*, p. 423.
4. Dac. let., 24 Aug. 1677, 7 Hug. 13 ; *ibid.*, p. 421.
5. The three ships arrived at Balasore respectively on 27 July, 19 August and 3 September.
6. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 424.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 424, 425, 427.
8. Hug. let., 18, 20, 23, & 24 Aug. 1677, 7 Hug. 4, 7, 8 ; *ibid.*, p. 427.
9. *Ibid.*
10. 1 Hug. 34 ; entries of 7 & 9 Oct. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 428.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 424.
12. 1 Kas. 10 ; *ibid.*, p, 421.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 435, 436 ; *Bengal and Madras Papers*, Vol. I., pp. 19, 32.

Emperor's *diwans* at Dacca (Rai Nandalal and Haji Shafi Khan respectively) to get the Company exempted from the mintage; but these officers expressed their inability to do so unless such exemption was granted by the Emperor.[1] Nevertheless the factors succeeded in having all the gold and silver sent from Kasimbazar to Rajmahal minted into gold mohurs and rupees.[2] It is not known whether the mintage was paid. Sales of treausre also took place from time to time.[3]

Besides the question of the mintage, two administrative changes carried out during the latter part of the year had further unsettling effects upon the Company's affairs in Bengal. The one was the appointment of Sultan Muhammad Azam, the Emperor's third son, as the vicerory of Bihar with its headquarters at Patna, and the other was the recall of Shaista Khan from Bengal. Prince Azam replaced the old incumbent at Patna sometime in August.[4] He appears to have arrived at Patna with the knowledge of the Emperor's orders for the levy of customs from the English merchants. Immediately on his arrival he took steps to give effect to these orders. His *diwan* refused to allow the despatch of the saltpetre boats for Hugli as also the bringing in of treasure to Patna until customs were paid on them.[5] It was only after the payment of a sum of rupees 1,200 to the *diwan* and his assistant as deposit of customs at 3 per cent pending the receipt of the Emperor's reply to a reference made to him on the subject that a compromise was made whereby the saltpetre boats were allowed to be sent down to Hugli.[6] Similarly treasure was also allowed to be brought to Patna subject to the production of the receipt for the payment of customs in Bengal. This requirement was met by producing, in December, the receipt from the governor of Hugli for the last annual present of rupees 3,000.[7]

The recall of Shaista Khan, which the factors came to know in September, naturally caused an apprehension among them about the attitude of the succeeding viceroy towards their trading privileges. They restricted further advances to the weavers at Kasimbazar[8] and, in the meantime, endeavourd to obtain a fresh *parwana* from Shaista Khan regarding their freedom of trade.[9] Shaista Khan was very busy at that time and he did not

1. Dac. let., 24 & 29 Aug.; 11, 22 & 27 Oct.; and 16 Nov., 1677, 7 Hug. 11, 13, 30, 34. 38 ; Bal. let., 4 January, 1678, *B. M. P.*, p. 40.
2. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 435.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 436.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 423.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 430, 435.
6. *B. M. P.*, pp. 13-14 ; 7 Hug. 26-27 ; *E. F. I.* 1670-77, p. 431.
7. *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, pp. 436-37.
8. *B. M. P.*, p. 34 ; Kas. let. 24 Nov. 1677, 7 Hug. 51 ; Hug. let., 28 Nov. 1677, 4 Hug. 40; *ibid.*, p. 438.
9. *B. M. P.*, p. 26; *ibid.*, p. 441.

grant any new *parwana*. He left Dacca on 8 December, and the requisition of boats for the transport of his luggage and huge retinue created some difficulty for the transport of the Company's goods down to Hugli ; for it was in the same month that the ships had to be sent away from Balasore. In fact the saltpetre boats that had been sent down from Patna were impressed at a place near Kasimbazar for the departing viceroy's use.[1] This caused some anxiety at Hugli where the factors feared that the goods might not arrive in time for the shipping. They therefore suggested the offer of bribes at Kasimbazar while the factor there, Edward Littleton, even contemplated the use of force for the release of the boats.[2] None of these measures was, however, needed, for the governor of Kasimbazar arranged for the supply of small boats by which all the saltpetre was despatched to Hugli on 26 November.[3]

Inspite of these difficulties and setbacks, the supply of goods from different factories was satisfactory. Altogether Charnock had sent 8,548 bags containing 15,468 maunds of saltpetre from Patna ;[4] whereas the Kasimbazar factory provided nearly 400 bales of silk,besides a proportionate quantity of *taffatis*.[5] Similarly the Hugli factory supplied most of the *malmals* and *rumals* contracted for ; and the Balasore factory supplied the desired quantity of calicoes.[6] It was only the Daccca factory, where the factors' time was mostly engaged in negotiation at the Nawab's court,which provided only 3,000 pieces of *cossaes* and *malmals* as against 13,000 required by the Company.[7] All these goods were safely brought down to Balasore and with these the three ships left the port on 25 and 29 December.

With the departure of Shaista Khan from Bengal and with the close of the year 1677 a peaceful and prosperous period of the Company's trade in Bengal came to an end. Nawab Shaista Khan had steadfastly adhered to his *parwana* of 1669 in dealing with the English East India Company. When the governor of Hugli, Malik Kasim, raised the point that the *parwana* did not cover the import of goods by the factors into Bengal, Shaista Khan was good enough to interpret it in favour of the English and, in order to remove any doubt on this point, granted them a fresh *parwana* specifically mentioning that both the export and import of goods by the English were to be exempt from the payment of any customs if only they paid the yearly

1. *B. M. P.* pp. 31-32 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, pp. 431-432.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Kas. let., 22, 24, 26, & 27 Nov., 1677, 7 Hug., 48 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 432.
4. *B. M. P.*, p. 38.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 34 ; Kas let., 3 & 6 Oct. 1677, 7 Hug. 25 ; *E. F. I.*, 1670-77, p. 439.
6. *B. M. P.*, pp. 11, 17, 36.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

peshcash of rupees 3,000. Even after this the English factors unreasonably carried on their animosity with Malik Kasim and endeavoured to oust him from his new post as governor of Balasore. Their allegation that Malik Kasim wanted to monopolise the goods brought by the Company is not true for, as the statements of the factors themeselves indisputably show, the English goods had as yet no appreciable demand in Bengal and elsewhere and there could have been no incentive for Malik Kasim or any other official for establishing a monopoly of those goods. On the contrary, the English goods were sometimes forcibly imposed on the local merchants by the factors as part-payment for the goods supplied to them.

During the period the factors were engaged in internecine quarrels and squabbles which reached such a point that the Company sent out Streynsham Master to enquire into their affairs. The proceedings of Master's enquiry show further that the factors were not always very upright and regular in their dealings wih those who carried on business with them. The factors used physical force in order to enforce the supplyofgoods by the local contractors and merchants which, on one occasion at least, resulted in the death of the victim. The factors also avoided and resisted the adjudication by local authorities of claims against them, and for that purpose, they even attempted to influence the course of the administration of justice.

Towards the end of the period their increasing business at Patna attracted the attention of the governor of that place who raised the question of the payment of customs. It was at that time the English factors began seriously to think about the obtaining of a fresh *farman* which they ought to have done shortly after the accession of Aurangzeb. On being informed by the governor of Patna about the extensive trade of the English in the eastern part of his empire the Emperor issued ordes, in 1676, for the levy of customs from them. For a time Shaista Khan decided to give effect to the Imperial orders, but, on being approached by the English, he referred the matter back to the Emperor for his further instructions, and, in the meantime, allowed the English to continue to trade in Bengal in accordance with the terms of the *parwana* of 1669. About the same time the English definitely decided to approach the Emperor in all seriousness for a new *farman* confirming the privileges they had been enjoying in Bengal. Thus with the close of the year 1677 a new period in the history of the English Company's trade in Bengal began.

Two Letters on Muslim Education in the Nineteenth Century

SHAMSUNNAHAR ASIRUDDIN *

The two letters that are reproduced here throw some light on the educational efforts of Nawab Abdul Latif Khan Bahadur of Faridpur (in East Pakistan) and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. These were published in *the Englishman* of 31 October 1888 and 17 April 1889. The first is a letter of Abdul Latif written to the then government of Bengal embodying his observations on certain proposals of the Education Commission (Hunter Commission). The second is a letter of Muhsin-Ul-Mulk written to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan on the 8th April 1889 congratulating the latter on the success of his educational efforts. In order to understand the proper significance of these two letters it is necessary to bear in mind the background of the educational efforts of Nawab Abdul Latif and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

In the first half of the nineteenth century the Muslim subjects of the East India Company were generally apathetic towards English Education. This was due mainly to the fact that they had a deep-rooted and elaborate system of education of their own and they were naturally averse to accept the language and literature of the foreigners who had deprived them of their political authority. They were also apprehensive that English education would lead to the undoing of their religion. Nor was this fear unfounded. There were a large number of Christian missionaries working zealously in the Company's dominions and conducting various types of educational institutions avowedly for the purpose of converting the people of these lands to Christianity.[1] Even the Company's high officials who were directly responsible for the formulation of Government education policy had strong and unconcealed evangelical sympathies. This was especially the case with Macaulay and Trevelyan, the two officials whose names stand out prominently in connection with the adoption of the resolution in favour of English education in 1835. They saw in this step the ultimate establishment of the Christian religion in India.[2]

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1. For a list of Christian Missionaries and missionary schools in Bengal in the mid-nineteenth centuray see M. M. Ali, *The Bengali Reaction to Christian Missionary Activities, 1833-1857*, Dacca, 1965, Appendix A.

2. See K. A. Ballhatchet, "The Home Government and Bentinck's Educational policy" *The Cambridge Historical Journal*, Vol. X, No. 2, 1951, pp. 224-229.

Such intentions of the missionaries and the officials naturally created much misgivings in the minds of the subject people who expressed their dissatisfaction over this whenever they found an opportunity to do so. The authorities in England, on the other hand, were ever eager to avoid exciting public opinion in the empire against their rule. They therefore took the earliest opportunities to remove the grounds of suspicion about their educational policy. Thus, for instance, they turned down the suggestion of the missionaries as well as the Mardas government, made in 1847, for the inclusion of the Bible as a text book in the government educational institutions and reminded the Governor-Genreral of "the absolute necessity of maintaining" the "most important principle" of religious neutrality "in its fullest extent".[1] The principle of religious neutrality was also embodied in clear terms in the Education Despatch of 1854 [2] and was reiterated in the Queen's proclamation of 1859. Thus by the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century the impression gradually gained ground that the government were determined to uphold the principle of religious neutrality irrespective of whatever might be the desires of the missionaries and the individual officials. On the other hand, a change was also coming over the attitude of the Muslims. The failure of the successive *Jihad* campaigns in the north-west frontier and more especially of the revolts of 1857 removed the vain hopes of many Muslims for regaining their political authority. In fact one of the good effects of the outbreaks of 1857 was that it convinced them of the reality of the British rule and the futility of active or passive resistance. The more practical minded among them recognised the necessity of not only accepting the British rule but also, for the sake of survival and amelioration of their own lot, of cooperating with them by learning their language and literature.[3] Thus the clarification made by the Home authorities about their educational policy and a realisation by the Muslims of the altered situation jointly paved the way for the latter's growing interest in English education.

The pioneer of English education among the Muslims in the nineteenth century was Nawab Abdul Latif Khan Bahadur (1828-1893)[4], although

1. *Despatches to India and Bengal*, Vol. 52, pp.1222-1226, and Vol.56, pp. 163-174, quoted in M.M. Ali, *op. cit.*, p, 66.

2. Despatch from the Court of Directors, No. 49, 19 July 1854, in J.A. Richey, *Selections from Educational Records*, Part II. Calcutta, 1922, pp. 364-393. See especially paras 8, 28, 37, 53, 56, 57 and 84.

3. This phase of the Muslims' attitude has sometimes been derogatorily characterised as "Loyalism."

4. Very little research has so far been done on the life nd work of Nawab Abdul Latif. Besides his own *A short account of my public life*, (1885) the only available account of his life is contained in Bradley-Birt's *Twelve Men of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century*, Calcutta, 1927.

this fact has often been overlooked because, perhaps, of the later but more brilliant efforts of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Abdul Latif, like most of the Muslim youths of that time, was educated in the Calcutta Madrasa where, however, he took the full advantage of an English class which was introduced in that institution in the early forties of the nineteenth century. His proficiency in English brought him into contact with the highest government officials and he was appointed a Deputy Magistrate in 1849. Since that time he became eager to attract his coreligionists towards English education. As a young official he did all that he could in that direction. He realised that a course of study in English could be made acceptable to the Muslims only by associating it with their own system of education. Hence in 1856 he took the leading part in establishing the Anglo-Persian Department at the Calcutta Madrasa.[1] For the purpose of encouraging thought and enquiry on the part of the Muslims on the subject of English education he offered, in the following year, a prize for the best essay in Persian on the question : "How far would the inculcation of European sciences through the medium of English language benefit Muhammadan students in the present circumstances of India and what are the most practicable means of imparting such instruction."[2] The essay competion was organised through the Education Council and the prize was won by Syed Abdul Fattah, the Arabic and Persian teacher at the Persi Benevolent Institution in Bombay.[3] Even this roused the opposition of the orthodox section who even denounced the giver of the prize as a traitor to his faith.[4] In 1863 he founded the Calcutta Muhammadan Literary Society for the same purpose of creating an interest in English education among the Muslims and for inculcating in them a knowledge of the sciences of the West. Within a couple of years the Society succeeded in making its mark upon the influential sections of the society, so much so that in the second annual conversazione the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Cecil Beadon, paid glowing tributes to Abdul Latif and remarked :[5]

"By founding the Muhammadan Literary Society you have successfully led the Muhammadans, not only of Bengal, but of India generally, to look beyond the narrow bounds of their own system, and to explore those accumulated treasure of thought and feeling which are to be found embodied in the English language ; while by your active and reasonable representations on many occasions you have led them to form a just conception of the policy and intentions of the government, and to express their opi-

1. Bradley-Birt, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 124-125.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 125
4. *Ibid.*
5. Quoted in *ibid.*,pp. 126-127.

nion freely. In this way you have naturally promoted a good understanding between this class of the community and their rulers and fellow-subjects ; and so far as the present altered state of feeling is owing to your active and liberal exertions, to the judicious exercise of your influence, and to the force of your example, I condiser you entitled to the gratitude of your countrymen and the cordial acknowledgement of this government."

On the same occasion the Viceroy, Sir John Lawrence, presented him a complete set of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in recognition of his services to the cause of English education among the Muslims.[1] As there was already an institution for the Muslims in the form of the Calcutta Madrasa Abdul Latif did not attempt to establish another only for the purpose of English education. He wanted that the course of study in English at the Madrasa should be systematised and strengthened and that the existing institution of higher English education should be thrown open for the Muslims. Thus he actively assisted the government in founding the Presidency College which threw its gates open to all creeds and classes in contradistinction to the Hindu College which, though devoted solely to English and western education, had restricted admission to the Hindus. He also called government attention to the inappropriate administration of the Mohsin Trust Fund which had hitherto been applied to the cause of education among the Hindus only, depriving its true beneficiaries of its legitimate share. It was because of his exertions that arrangements were made for devoting a considerable portion of the Mohsin Trust for the education of the Muslims.

In 1882 Lord Ripon appointed a commission under the chairmanship of W.W. Hunter to report on the progress of education since 1854 and to suggest measures for further improvement. The Commission submitted a detailed report of their investigation in 1883 and suggested, *inter alia*, the necessity of providing moral education to the students. For that purpose it recommended that "*an attempt be made to prepare a moral text-book,based upon the fundamental principles of natural religion, such as may be taught in all Government and non-Government colleges.*"[2] This recommendation was made with a view to avoiding the religious susceptibil ties of the different religious groups but it produced just the opposite result. Instead of taking it as an instance of government neutrality in religious matters, many took the recommendation as derogatory to their respective system of religion.Some misunderstanding might have been caused by the fact that the Commission did not make it a secret that they had already received a letter from Dr. Meurin,

1. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
2. *Report of the Indian Education Commission*, 1883, p. 307.

R.C. Bishop of Bombay, offering to draw up a moral text-book of the kind suggested. It also revealed that Dr. V. French, Bishop of Lahore, "contemplated the publication of a similar work."[1] In reviewing the Report of the Education Commission, however, the Government of India expressed doubt, on 23 October 1884, "whether such a moral text-book...could be introduced without raising a variety of burning questions." It also questioned the efficacy of the porposed measure. "Strongly as it may be urged that a purely secular education is imperfect", further observed the Government, "it does not appear probable that a text-book of morality, sufficiently vague and colourless, to be accepted by Christians, Mahomedans and Hindus, would do much, especially in the stage of collegiate instruction, to remedy the defects or supply the shortcomings of such an education."[2] The matter did not, however, rest there. On a reference to the home authorities Lord Cross, the then Secretary of State for India, took a different view and, in a Despatch dated the 29th September 1887, requested the goevernment of India to take steps for the preparation of a moral text book as suggested by the Education Commission.[3] It was at that stage that Abdul Latif addressed the letter reproduced below to the government pointing out the unsuitability and unreasonableness of the contemplated text-book. His fear was not so much about the intentions of the government as of those who would be entrusted with the task of preparing the text-book in question. As the authors would be men "of the most earnest religious convictions" they might purposely or innocently include matters, in a rather neutral garb, which would be destructive of the fundamentals of other religions, such as Islam. His apprehension was justified not only by the fact, as noted above, that some Christian ministers were eager to see such a book introduced in the educational institutions, but also by the fact that the Calcutta University had then adopted a similar'y general type of moral text-book for the Entrance Examination which contained, as Abdul Latif pointed out, "the foulest abuse of the Prophet of Islam".

It may be added here that as a result of the objections raised by Abdul Latif the matter was widely discussed in the press and on the platform. The government of India referred the matter to the local governments asking for their opinions on the subject. The majority of them thought that the proposed text-book would be useless.[4] Finally, therefore, the Government of India resolved, on 17 August 1889, that "..the end in

1. *Ibid.*
2. Quoted in Syed Mahmood, *History of English Education in India*, Aligarh, 1895, p.117.
3. Despatch dated 29th September 1887, quoted in Mahmood, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
4. Mahmood, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

view would not be attained by prescribing for use in colleges and schools a treatise on ethics, or a book of didactic instruction in the rules and principles of conduct. It believes that the careful selection and training of teachers provide the most effectual method of establishing a good moral tone in a school. . . . "[1]

Thus by his timely exertions abdul Latif ensured that the government educational institutions were not in any way used to undermine the religious systems of the people of this country. In fact, the cardinal principle of his educational efforts was to see that the Muslims acquired English education without compromising their religious and cultural identity.

The educational efforts of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan are more widely known.[2] It should be emphasised here, however, that he was not the pioneer of English education among the Muslims of this subcontinent. That position definitely goes to Maulavi Abdul Latif. Indeed, Sir Syed was inspired by the latter's Mahomedan Literary Society to found the famous Ghazipur Translation Society (subsequently named the Scientific Society) for the purpose of disseminating western ideas among the Muslims through their vernaculars. In 1867 Syed Ahmad urged upon the government, through the Aligarh branch of the British Indian Association, to establish there an institute of advanced learning where the medium of instruction would be the vernacular language. Alternatively, he asked for the establishment of a faculty of Urdu at the Calcutta University and the establishment of a university in the North-Western Provinces (modern Uttar Pradesh) where the medium of instruction should be Urdu. The government showed some inclination to accede to the proposal. At this the Hindus, especially of Benares, organised an anti-Urdu movement. Committe s were set up at different places in northern India and a vigorous agitation was started for the substitution of Urdu by Hindi in the courts and the offices. "The early political electicism of Sayyid Ahmad Khan received a shock", to quote Dr. Aziz Ahmad, "when Babu Shiv Prasad, himself a writer of Urdu, pushed his dislike of the former Muslim rule in India and its heritage to the extent of pressing the Hindu members of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Scientific Society to replace Urdu by Hindi as the language of transactions in the Society."[3] In view of the agitation of the Hindus the government not

1. *Ibid.*

2. There are a number of works on Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan ; but G.F.I. Graham's *Life and Work of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan* still remains the best biography of the leader.

3. Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in Indian En ironment*, Oxford, 1964, p. 260, quoting the authority of Gracin de Tassy, *La Langue et la litterature Hindoustanies en 1870*, Paris, 1871, pp. 40-41.

only shelved Syed Ahmad's proposal for the Urdu University but also began to conciliate them by substituting Urdu by Hindi in the offices and the courts.[1] It was at this stage that Sir Syed Ahmad, realising the urgency of English education for the Muslims, began to think of English as the medium of instruction. His ideas about a suitable system of education for the Muslims wherein the essentials of their religion and culture could be fruitfully combined with English education did not finally crystallise till after his return from England in the early seventies after having witnessed the working of the Oxford and the Cambridge Universities. In 1877 the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College was founded.

Thus, initially a champion of disseminating western ideas through the medium of Urdu, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan came round to the policy of English education primarily as a result of the fierce and fanatical opposition of the Hindus. Like Maulavi Abdul Latif he took steps to see that the adoption of English education did not in any way compromise the religious and cultural identity of the Muslims. Like him, again, Sir Syed was misunderstood by the unenlightened section of the Muslims who even suspected him of anti-Islamic sentiments. The letter reproduced here brings to light the important fact that even Mohsin-Ul-Mulk, who has generally been known as the collaborator of Sir Syed in his educational efforts, had initially serious misgivings about his policy of English education and had been one of his "opponents".

I

(*Nawab Abdul Latif's letter to the government on certain proposals of the Education Commission*).

Nawab Abdul Latif, C.I.E., returns to the subject of discipline and moral training in schools, which he recently discussed at length, in a letter addressed to the Bengal government. He sets forth his reasons for disapproving of certain proposals of the Education Commission. The following are a few extracts from the letter :-

"The curriculum of Indian Schools is so exacting that a boy finds it hard to make time at home for other studies without affecting his prospects at school. That, indeed, has always been the educational difficulty with the Mohamedans. They cannot give up their religious instruction, at the same time the secular curriculum of the government schools, and the aided institutions under Hindu management, ignores the necessity

1. At first Urdu was substituted by Hindi as a medium of recording in the law courts in Bihar. In 1872-73 Urdu was similarly replaced by Hindi in the subordinate offices in the Central Provinces and in the Darjeeling district of Bengal. In 1881 the government of Bengal ordered the exclusive use of Hindi in the Devanagari script in Bihar. The climax came in 1898 when the governor of the North-Western Provinces (modern Uttar Pradesh) replaced Urdu by Hindi in the lower courts and showed an unintelligent hostility towards the Muslims and their educational institutions like the Aligarh College and the Nadvat al-Ulama.

of the former altogether, and is so high that it is impossible for any student to go on simultaneously with both. The Hindus for the most part give up their domestic religious education and confine their attention to the secular instruction given in the schools ; and for this, among other reasons, they are almost always at the top of the list. The Mohamedans prize their religious instruction more highly, and consequently fail to keep abreast of their Hindu country-men in scholastic competition. In some cases Mohamedan boys elect to run an even race with their Hindu competitors by neglecting the religious instruction ; the result is promising from the secular point of view ; they turn out clever men in their own way ; but it is no wonder if they turn out to be irreligious and deficient in discipline and in reverence. This gives rise to dissatisfaction in the minds of the elders of the community and room for the appearance of those old suspicions against English education which it has cost me a life's labour to remove from the minds of my co-religionists. Because I am afraid the time is still very distant when my co-religionists in Bengal will have acquired sufficient wealth, energy and organisation to start aided schools of their own. The ground is to a great extent occupied by Christian missionary institutions which are in possession of grants in-aid, and by schools under Hindu management. At the same time, religious and moral education are so necessary for the best interests of society, that it is extermely undesirable that one or other of them should be postponed for an indefinite period, awaiting the time when the Mohamedans should have made sufficient progress in material prosperity and aptitude for organisation. In my humble opinion, the government, while maintaining its attitude of strict religious neutrality, shoulud afford facilities for the formation of special religious classes in government schools for different communities who may desire. At the outset, the attitude of government should not be permissive only, but inviting and encouraging as well. The government officers need only arragange for the time set apart for religious instruction, but the teaching might be carried out by private and not state agency. In Bengal, the Moshin fund might furnish the nucleus for the fund out of which teachers of the religion of Islam might be paid. The Mohamedan community will hail with delight such an appropriation for any part of the income of that splendid endowment, and they might be left to raise any further funds as might be required from time to time to endow such teacherships.

"I do not at all agree with the recommendation of the Education Commission that a moral text book be prepared, based on the fundamental principles of natural religion,—firstly, on the ground that natural religion is an unacceptable term to every firm believer in a particular religion like Islam, based upon express revelation. Those who found their faith upon such a basis are not prepared to join in an eclectic search amid the tenets of the many religions prevalent in India, and selecting therefrom some parts as natural, and rejecting others as artificial. Secondly, on the ground that there will be no security that a text book prepared by a mixed committee may not contain priciples and expressions prejudicial to the faith of Islam. If, in a purely literary course, the Calcutta University could use no objection in selecting as texts for their examinations writings like "Addison's Spectator no 94," and "Scott's Talisman", full of the foulest abuse of the prophet of Islam, what hope can the Mohamedans have of absolute neutrality in a compilation which obviously must be prepared

under the Superintendence of men of the most earnest religious convictions?

"To my mind it is impossible to separate morals from religion and I have therefore very little faith in the efficacy of secularised moral instruction as distinguished from religious instruction. From my point of view the only effective way for teaching morals to the young is to teach them the religion in which they have been born and bred, and which their guardians wish them to follow It is for this reason that I have addressed myself to the task of discussing the otherwise apparently irrelevant question of religious instruction, on a reference as to the proper means for imparting moral instruction to the alumni of our schools.

"The last point upon which I wish to dwell is that relating to the debating clubs and societies of students. I appreciate fully the great assistance which such organisations, properly conducted, give to the cause of education by encouraging habits of reading, writing and speaking among the boys. But there ought, to my mind, to be a safe limit to the subjects of discussion in such places. To allow a boy of fourteen or sixteen to discuss the fundamental principles of social, political and religious fabrics is as dangerous a proceeding as to let him play with destructive weapons of whose use he has no clear conception."—*The Englishman*, 31 October, 1888.

II

(*Mohsin-Ul-Mulk's letter to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan*)

My dear Sir Syed Ahmed,

Nearly a quarter of a century has now passed since I met and argued with you regarding your ideas for the improvement of Mohamedan education in India. I was then one of your opponents, and when you explained to me all that you intended to accomplish I laughed, because, knowing the dilatoriness and apathy of my fellow-countrymen, and knowing also that some of your religious views were not favourably regarded by a large majority of Mohamedans in India, I felt sure that your hopes could never be realised. But in course of time my views changed. I saw that you were in earnest. Gradually my objections were overcome, and I at length became convinced that you were right and I was wrong. Then my heart went out towards yours, and I resolved to do what little I could to help you. By degrees each obstacle was overcome, each difficulty removed, until at last you were able to gain a firm footing, and then, after nearly ten years, the Aligurh College became an accomplished fact. Then, indeed, I rejoiced with you, and it was a source of pride and pleasure to me to think that I had been a helper, although a humble one, in the noble work.

During the last fourteen years I have occasionally visited the College and have seen with pleasure the progress that has been made. I have seen a waste and desert piece of land turned into a garden; the seedling have sprung up into trees, which not only bear fruit abundantly, but also furnish shade and shelter to those who desire it. Noble buildings have been erected, and constantly been enlarged and increased, and throughout them is the busy hum of life and youth. This is what is visible to the eye, but it is also a type of the moral success which the College has achieved.

It is given to few men to see the work of their own hands accomplished. We have most of us to work for a future generation and others reap where we have sown. For you, however, a happier fate has been reserved. Not only can you pluck the fruit from the trees you have planted, but are able to enjoy the moral fruits of the work you have brought into life. You can see the good that is being done to hundreds and thousands of our young men. You have seen the moral seed that you have sown spring up and bear fruit, and you have sent forth thousands of our countrymen to carry on the good work you have commenced. You have the satisfaction of feeling that you have breathed life into what at one time seemed only dead bones.

I am told that in the great desert of Sahara there is nothing but a waste of sand, there is no vegetation, not a tree, not a blade of grass ; there is nothing to support life. Somewhat like this desert was the outlook for Mohamedan education twenty five years ago. But I am also told that in the great desert it is only necessary to dig a few feet in order to come across water. If this is done, the water bubbles up and spreads around ; grass begins to grow, trees spring up, and in a short time a beautiful oasis is formed. So it is with you ; you dug in the sand of the desert, and have, with the blessing of God, created an oasis which is a joy and a benefit to us all.

There are of course many Educational Establishments in India where Mohamedans can gain instruction. Thanks to the liberality of the British Government, numberless Schools and Colleges have been founded where Musssulmans, equally with other race of India, can study side by side. The main object of the Aligurh College, however, was to create an establishment where a purely Mohamedan course of instruction could be followed, which at the same time should keep pace with modern requirements. Not only were our boys to be given a modern education, but they were also to be brought up in the orthodox observances of their own faith. They were to be instructed in their own religion ; taught to observe their national customs, and trained in their social historical traditions. In a word, they were to be made, not merely educated machines without a religion or belief, But they were to be made educated Mohamedans fit to help in the great work of raising their fellow-countrymen and of teaching them how to ....“Rise on stepping - stones of their dead selves to higher things.” This was a high and noble aim, but it seemed impossible of accomplishment.

Though my interest in the College during the last fourteen years has never abated, and though from time to time I have visited it, I have never until lately had leisure to examine for myself whether these objects had been attained. Last February such an opportunity occurred. I was able to spend two days in Aligurh, and I examned into every detail. There were in all some three hundred boys, and I took each class and each form. I questioned the boys minutely, and examined them as well in their religious text books as in their historical traditions. The result was to me most satisfactory, and I can safely say that the lofty ideal at which I, in my despair, had laughed 24 years ago, has been realised. I found a healthy national spirit growing up among the boys and a firm faith in their religious creeds. What, however, to me was most pleasing, was that I found boys to be living together without any of those religious quarrels and dissensions which have so sadly disturbed the Mohamedan world.

Shias and Sunnees were being separately taught their own creeds, but they were also being taught to tolerate and respect each other's belief. This was even more than I had hoped for, and I can therefore say that the promises held out, large though they were, have been more than fulfilled.

As regards religious instruction, Aligurh, in my opinion, compares favourably with the great English Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. At these the religious instruction given is only of one denomination. It is essentially Protestant. In fact, I believe that it is only of recent years that the students belonging to the Roman Catholic or other creeds were allowed to matriculate. At Aligurh it is different. The various denominations all receive instruction, each in its own special text books, and each sect prays apart in its own manner. But at the same time there is no spirit of separatism. The boys learn toleration and mutual respect, and there is no elements of discord to divide them in their religious feelings.

Coming to hear that the boys were given opportunities of learning how to speak and debate, I made a point of visiting them while so employed. I suggested as a subject for debate the manner in which Shias and Sunnees should live together. The members of the Shia and Sunnee sects were ranged on opposite benches, and I was pleased and surprised to hear one rise after the other, and every one plead, sometimes with considerable eloquence. I was especially pleased with one lad, who distinguished himself beyond the rest by the soundness of his argument and the eloquence of his language.—"we have all one God," he said, and "we have all one prophet. One God and one prophet is the formula of faith which we all use ; why, then, should we allow petty difference of belief, which we know are not essential to our religion, to separate us form one another and to weaken us as a nation !" This young champion of peace and brotherly love was the grandson of an old friend of mine, whom I have known for many years as a most bigotted Sunnee, ever ready to take a part in a religious quarrel. I think nothing could better show the great result which the Aligurh College has attained, or prove how excellent must be the training and discipline which has produced such fruit. In this respect I think that the College offers far more advantages than the government or indigenous schools. In the former, owing to reasons well known, no religious education can be given, and in the latter the tendency is to train up the boys in principles of sectarian hatred and bigotry.

Although a national and religious feeling is thus being developed, I was pleased to find that a patriotic and loyal spirit is entertained by the boys towards the British government. This feeling soon became evident to me, and it was satisfactory to find the lads firmly convinced of the great truth that under no other government, not even a Mohamedan one, could they expect to be so prosperous, happy and peaceful as under the British.

A healthy mind is, however, not sufficient. It must also be the tenant of a healthy body. For this due care has been taken and the great failing of so many Indian Educational Establishments, want of physical training, has been avoided. The boys are not mere book worms but are encouraged to take an active part in games and sports of all kinds, cricket, lawn-tennis, racquets, running and jumping form their outdoor amusements, and have the effect of producing a good physical development. I have had proof of this in the case of my own nephew, who, after having

been for sometime in the College, accompanined me last year to England where he was able to join, with credit to himself, in all the manly sports of the young Englishmen. So well did he acquit himself, that many of the friends I made there congratulated me on the way he had been trained and brought up.

This is the result of what I saw during my two days' visit at Aligurh, and I left deeply impressed with the great work that is being achieved. It is a work which I believe to be unique of its kind, and on which you only, my old friend, could have accomplished. I wish now to offer you my most sincere and heartfelt congratulations, upon the eminent success with which your labours, aided by those of an able and devoted staff, have been crowned. To myself personally it will always be a source of pride and pleasure to think that I have, even in a remote manner, been allowed to help in the work and to be connected with a noble institution, which is year after year sending forth hundreds of young men who, while able to compete with others in the race for wealth and power, are at the same time true to their religon and nation, and loyal to their Empress-Qeen. An establishment of this kind will show that there is still life in Mohamedanism and the example you have so nobly set will, I trust, soon be followed by others. To you, however, is due the credit of having taken the first step and it is your name that will always be mentioned with honour, when the great revival of Mohamedan education of which your college is, I trust, but a foreruner shall fairly set in. This is the cause which both you and I have at heart. It is in aid of this cause that you have so unselfishly worked, and with the blessing of God the result of your work will be that a new generation will start forth, fired by high noble aims, and prepared to show themselves worthy of descendants of the glorious traditions of their ancestors.

Hydrabad, Yours very Sincerely
the 8th April, 1889. Mohsin-Ul-Mulk (Mehdi Ali)

The Englishman, 17 April, 1889

ইতিহাস বিদ্যা সম্পর্কে ইবন খলদুন

মফীজুল্লাহ কবীর *

বিখ্যাত ঐতিহাসিক ও সমাজ বিজ্ঞানী আবদুর রহমান ইবন খলদুন তাঁর মুকাদ্দিমায় (বিশ্ব ইতিহাসের ভূমিকায়) ইতিহাস বিদ্যার প্রয়োজনীয়তা, ঐতিহাসিকের সমস্যা, ইতিহাস রচনায় ত্রুটি প্রমাদের কারণ এবং নির্ভুল ও নিরপেক্ষ ইতিহাস রচনার নিয়মাবলী লিপিবদ্ধ করে গেছেন। ইতিহাসের সংজ্ঞা দিতে গিয়ে তিনি বলেছেন:

"ইতিহাস এমন একটি বিদ্যা যার চর্চা বিভিন্ন জাতি ও বর্ণের লোকদের মধ্যে সচরাচর প্রচলিত। এর প্রতি লোকদের আকর্ষণ অত্যধিক। রাস্তার লোক, সাধারণ লোক ইতিহাস জানতে আগ্রহশীল। রাজাবাদশারা ও নেতারা এর জন্য প্রতিযোগিতা করে। শিক্ষিত, অশিক্ষিত সকলেই এর অর্থ বুঝতে পারে। কারণ আপাত দৃষ্টিতে ইতিহাস রাজনৈতিক ঘটনা, রাজবংশ ও সুদূর অতীতের ঘটনা সম্বন্ধে তত্ত্ব বই ত নয়। এ তত্ত্ব সালঙ্কারে পরিবেশিত ও প্রবাদ বাক্যের সমন্বয়ে মুখরোচক করা হয়। ইহা বিরাট জনতাকে আনন্দ দেয় এবং আমাদেরকে মানবীয় ব্যাপার সম্বন্ধে জ্ঞান দান করে।..."

"পক্ষান্তরে ইতিহাসের গূঢ়ার্থ মননশীলতা, সত্য উদঘাটনের চেষ্টা, বর্তমান বস্তু সমূহের কারণ ও মূলের সূক্ষ্ম ব্যাখ্যা এবং ঘটনাসমূহের 'কেন ও কিভাবে'র গভীর জ্ঞানের মধ্যে নিহিত রয়েছে। সুতরাং ইতিহাস দৃঢ়ভাবে দর্শনের মধ্যে মূলীভূত এবং একে দর্শনের শাখা বললেও ভুল হবেনা।"[১]

পূর্ববর্তী মুসলিম ঐতিহাসিকদের সম্বন্ধে ইবন খলদুন বলেন যে তাঁরা ইতিহাস বিষয়ে অনেক বই লিখে গেছেন কিন্তু যেসব লোকের ইতিহাস চর্চায় কোন অধিকারই নেই তারাই তাদের বইতে আজগুবি গালগল্প, অলীক কাহিনী ও মনগড়া বিষয় লিপিবদ্ধ করে গেছে। পরবর্তী লিখকগণ বিনা বিচারে সে সব কাহিনী গ্রহণ করে নিয়েছে। এভাবে অনেক ইতিহাস গ্রন্থ লেখা হয়েছে, কিন্তু সুপরিচিত ও প্রামাণ্য ইতিহাস বই খুবই কম। ইবন খলদুন বিখ্যাত ঐতিহাসিকদের মধ্যে ইবন ইসহাক, তাবারী, ইবনুল কালবী, আল ওয়াকিদী, সায়ফ ইবন উমর আল আসাদী ও আল মাসউদীর নাম উল্লেখ করেছেন। তাঁর মতে পরবর্তী ঐতিহাসিকগণ সকলেই গতানুগতিক ও একঘেয়ে হয়ে পড়েছে। তারা পূর্ববর্তী ঐতিহাসিকদের হুবহু নকল করতে শুরু করে। তারা পূর্ববর্তী ঐতিহাসিকদের তথ্য ও উপকরণ হুবহু পুণরাবৃত্তি করতে থাকে। কোন ঘটনার তাৎপর্য ব্যাখ্যা তাদের পক্ষে সম্ভব ছিলনা। তাদের লেখা ইতিহাসের ঠাট

* ডঃ মফীজুল্লাহ কবীর ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ইতিহাস বিভাগের অধ্যাপক (Professor) এবং বিভাগীয় প্রধান।

১। মুকাদ্দিমা, (মিসর) ১ম খণ্ড, পৃঃ ৩।

আছে কিন্তু প্রাণ নেই। আবার এমন ঐতিহাসিকও আছে যারা শুধু রাজা বাদশাদের নাম ধাম আর তাদের রাজত্বকালের সময় তালিকা নিয়েই সন্তুষ্ট। এদের ইতিহাস নিতান্ত অবিশ্বাস্য ও গ্রহণের অনুপযোগী।[২]

এর পর ইবন খলদুন ঐতিহাসিকদের ত্রুটি প্রমাদের বিষয় বিষদভাবে বর্ণনা করেন। তিনি বলেন যে ঐতিহাসিকগণ, তফসীর লিখকগণ (কুরআনের ভাষ্য লিখক) ও হাদীস বর্ণনা কারীগণ পুঙখানুপুঙখরূপে যাচাই না করেই অনেক ঘটনা ও গল্প বর্ণনা করেছেন। তাঁরা দর্শনের মাপকাঠি দিয়ে অথবা ঐতিহাসিক অন্তর্দৃষ্টি দিয়ে এসব কাহিনীকে ঝালিয়ে নেননি। "সুতরাং তাঁরা সত্য থেকে ভ্রষ্ট হয়েছেন এবং ভিত্তিহীন ধারণা ও ভুলভ্রান্তির মরুভূমিতে হারিয়ে গেছেন।"[৩]

এ রকম ত্রুটি প্রমাদ বিশেষভাবে সংখ্যার বেলায় ঘটে। এ সংখ্যা সৈন্যসামন্ত সম্পর্কেই হোক অথবা টাকা পয়সার ব্যাপারেই হোক। দৃষ্টান্ত স্বরূপ বলা যায় আল-মাসউদী ইসরাঈলীদের সৈন্যবাহিনীর সংখ্যা ছয়লক্ষের অধিক বলে উল্লেখ করেছেন। কিন্তু এত বড় সৈন্যবাহিনী একক দল হিসাবে চলাফেরা করতে পারেনা। তাদের যুদ্ধ সাজে সাজাতে হলে তাদের সম্পূর্ণ রাজ্যেও স্থান সঙ্কুলান হতনা। বর্তমান কালের সঙ্গে অতীতের তুলনা করলেও এ উক্তির যথার্থতা প্রমাণ হবে। এ প্রসঙ্গে ইবন খলদুন একটি অতি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ মন্তব্য করেছেন, "এক পানির সাথে আরেক পানির যেমন সাদৃশ্য অতীতের সঙ্গে ভবিষ্যতেরও তেমন সাদৃশ্য।"[৪] ইবন খলদুন আরো বলেন পারস্য সাম্রাজ্য ঈরাঈলীদের রাজ্য অপেক্ষা অনেক বৃহৎ ছিল, তবুও পারস্যবাসীদের সেনা-বাহিনী কখনও ১,২০,০০০ এর অধিক ছিলনা। ইসরাঈলীদের সৈন্যবাহিনী যদি এত বড় হত তাহলে তাদের সাম্রাজ্যও অনেক বিস্তৃত হত। কারণ, কোন রাজবংশের প্রদেশ সমূহের সংখ্যানুপাতেই এর সেনাবাহিনীর সংখ্যা হয়ে থাকে।

ইসরাঈলীদের রাজ্য জর্দান ও প্যালেষ্টাইন এবং মদীনা ও খাইবার অঞ্চল অপেক্ষা বৃহত্তর ছিলনা। ইসরাঈল এবং মুসার মধ্যে মাত্র তিন পুরুষের ব্যবধান। কাজেই এই অল্প সময়ের মধ্যে ইসরাঈলীদের সংখ্যা এত অধিক হতে পারেনা। যদিও এ সংখ্যা সোলায়মানের সময়ের সংখ্যা বলে ধরা হয় তাহলেও এটি সম্ভব নয়, কারণ ইসরাঈল ও সোলায়মানের মধ্যে এগার পুরুষের ব্যবধান। এগার পুরুষে একজন লোকের বংশধর-গণ কয়েক শত বা বড় জোর কয়েক সহস্র হতে পারে, কিন্তু এর বেশী হওয়া অসম্ভব। অন্যপক্ষে বিশ্বস্ত সূত্রে সোলায়মানের সৈন্য সংখ্যা ১২,০০০ পদাতিক ও ১৪০০ অশ্বা-রোহী বলে জানা যায়। সোলায়মানের সময়েই ইসরাঈলীদের রাজ্য চরম বিস্তৃতি লাভ করে এবং উন্নতির উচ্চ শিখরে আরোহন করে।

২। ঐ, পৃঃ ৪—৫।
৩। মুকাদ্দিমা, পৃঃ ৯।
৪। ঐ, পৃ: ৯ ;— فالماضي اشبه بالاتي من الماء بالماء

ইসরাঈলীদের সৈন্য সংখ্যা সম্পর্কে মাসউদীর উক্তির সমালোচনা করতে গিয়ে উপরোক্ত যুক্তিতর্কের অবতারণা করে ইবন খলদুন এ সকল বিষয়ে ঐতিহাসিকদের অতিরঞ্জন প্রবণতা সম্বন্ধে আরো পুঙখানুপুঙখ আলোচনা করেছেন। তিনি বলেন, যখন সমসাময়িকরা তাদের নিজস্ব অথবা সমকালীন অন্য কোন বংশের সৈন্য সংখ্যা সম্পর্কে বলে, এবং যখন তারা মুসলমান অথবা খৃষ্টান সৈন্য সম্বন্ধে আলোচনায় প্রবৃত্ত হয় অথবা যখন তারা রাজস্বের সংখ্যা কিংবা সরকার কর্তৃক ব্যয়িত অর্থের সংখ্যা, অমিত-ব্যয়ী লোকের খরচের ফিরিস্তি এবং বিত্তবান ও ধনাঢ্যদের গচ্ছিত সম্পদ সম্পর্কে আলোচনা করে তখন সচরাচর তারা অতিশয়োক্তি করে এবং চাঞ্চল্য স্থষ্টির উন্মাদনায় মেতে উঠে। একটু তলিয়ে দেখলেই বুঝা যাবে যে প্রকৃত সংখ্যা এসব অতিশয়োক্তির এক দশমাংশ মাত্র। এসব ঐতিহাসিক অবলীলা ক্রমে অতিশয়োক্তির আশ্রয় গ্রহন করে এবং মিথ্যা গালগল্প স্থষ্টি করে বিভ্রান্তিকর পরিস্থিতির স্থষ্টি করে। ঐতিহাসিকগণ বর্ণিত গালগল্পের দৃষ্টান্ত দিতে গিয়ে ইবন খলদুন মুসলমানদের মধ্যে প্রচলিত বহু অবাস্তব কাহিনীর উল্লেখ করেন। ইয়ামনের তুব্বা রাজাদের সম্বন্ধে কাহিনী প্রচলিত ছিল তাঁরা ইয়ামন থেকে উত্তর আফ্রিকা-অভিযান করেন, এমন কি শেষ তুব্বা রাজা মসুল ও আজরবাইজান দখল করেন। তিনি তুর্কীদিগকে পরাজিত করে তাদের বহু লোককে হত্যা করেন। তিনি তাঁর পুত্রগণকে পারসিকদের বিরুদ্ধে, সোগদিয়ান-দের বিরুদ্ধে, তুর্কীদের বিরুদ্ধে, এবং বাইজন্টাইনদের বিরুদ্ধে প্রেরণ করেন। তাঁরা একদিকে চীনদেশ ও অপরদিকে কনষ্টান্টিনোপল জয় করেন। এসব কাহিনীকে ইবন খলদুন অতিরঞ্জিত বলে মনে করেন। তিনি বলেন তুব্বা রাজাদের রাজ্য আরব দেশেই সীমাবদ্ধ ছিল। আরব উপদ্বীপের তিন দিকেই সাগর। ইয়ামন থেকে সিরিয়া ও মিসর পার না হয়ে উত্তর আফ্রিকায় যাওয়া যায় না। অথচ এসব অঞ্চল কখনও তুব্বাদের দখলে আসেনি। অনুরূপ পারসিকদের রাজ্য অতিক্রম না করে তারা তুর্কীদের রাজ্য অতিক্রম করতে পারতনা। ঐ ধরণের তথ্য যাচাই বাছাই না করে কখনও গ্রহণ করা ঠিক হবেনা।

এরপর ইবন খলদুন কুরআনে বর্ণিত ইরাম নগরী সম্বন্ধে প্রচলিত গল্পের সমা-লোচনা করেন। এই গল্প অনুসারে শাদ্দাদ নামক এক বাদশাহ বেহেশ্‌তের বর্ণনা শুনে অনুরূপ একটি শহর পৃথিবীতে তৈরী করার সঙ্কল্প করেন এবং তিনশত বৎসর ধরে আদনের মরুভূমিতে ইরাম শহর নির্মাণ করেন। শহরের নির্মাণ কার্য শেষ হওয়ার পর শাদ্দাদ লোক লস্কর সহ সেখানে যাত্রা করেন কিন্তু একদিন ও এক রাত্রির রাস্তা বাকী থাকতেই আকাশ থেকে বজ্রপাত হয়ে মৃত্যুমুখে পতিত হন। তাবারী, জামাখ-শারী ও সাআলিবী প্রমুখ ভাষ্যকারগণ এই গল্প বর্ণনা করেছেন। এই গল্প অনুসারে ইবন কিলাবা নামক এক ব্যক্তি মুআবিয়ার রাজত্বকালে উষ্ট্র খুজ্‌তে গিয়ে এই শহর দেখতে পায় এবং খুশীমত এখান থেকে ধন সম্পদ আহরণ করে। ইবন

খলদুন বলেন কোন প্রত্নতাত্ত্বিক এ ধরণের নগরের অস্তিত্ব সম্বন্ধে কিছুই বলেননি। কুরআনের ভাষ্যকারগণ যদি বলতেন যে অন্যান্য প্রাচীন শহরের মত ইরাম শহরও ধ্বংস হয়ে গেছে তাহলে তা বিশ্বাসযোগ্য হত, কিন্তু তাঁরা বলেন শহরটি এখনও বিদ্যমান রয়েছে। আবার কেহ কেহ বলেন সাদা চোখে এ শহর দেখা যাবেনা। ইবন খলদুন বলেন এসব অলীক গালগল্প ছাড়া আর কিছুই নয়।[৫]

এর পর ইবন খলদুন বার্মাকীদের পতন সম্পর্কে সচরাচর প্রচলিত কাহিনীর[৬] তীব্র সমালোচনা করেন। মামুনের সম্বন্ধে প্রচলিত একটি গল্পের উল্লেখ করে তিনি বলেন যে মামুন একবার নৈশ বিহারের সময় একটি বাড়ীর ছাদ থেকে ঝুলন্ত ঝুড়ির সাহায্যে সে বাড়িতে ঢুকে একজন সুন্দরী মহিলার সঙ্গে রাত কাটান। তিনি এ গল্পও ভিত্তিহীন ও অলীক বলে মনে করেন। তিনি বলেন ঐতিহাসিকদের মধ্যে এ রকম গল্প আবিস্কারের কারণ দুটি, প্রথমতঃ নিষিদ্ধ আমোদ প্রমোদের প্রতি তাদের প্রবণতা। তারা এসব নিষিদ্ধ আমোদ আহলাদে প্রবৃত্ত হয়ে অতীতকালের মেয়ে-পুরুষদের মধ্যে এর দৃষ্টান্ত আবিষ্কারে মনোযোগী হয়। দ্বিতীয়তঃ তারা অন্যের সুনাম সুখ্যাতি কলুষিত করতে চায়।[৭]

অতঃপর ইবন খলদুন মিসরের উবাইদী (ফাতিমীয়) খলীফাগণের বংশ পরিচয় সম্পর্কে এক আলোচনার অবতারনা করেন। তাঁরা হজরত রসুলের (দঃ) বংশধর বলে দাবী করেন। এ সম্পর্কে ঐতিহাসিকদের মধ্যে মতভেদ রয়েছে। ইবন খলদুন মনে করেন যে তাঁরা হজরত রসুলের (দঃ) বংশধর। বিরুদ্ধবাদীরা যে ঘটনার উপর নির্ভর করে তাঁদের এ দাবী অস্বীকার করে সেটা হল এই যে ১০১১ খৃষ্টাব্দে আব্বাসীয় খলীফা কাদিরের সময় বাগদাদ থেকে কাজী, ধর্মীয় নেতা ও অন্যান্য প্রধান ব্যক্তিগণ একটি ঘোষণা পত্রে ফাতিমীয়গণের রসুল-বংশের দাবী মিথ্যা বলে প্রচার করেন। ঐতিহাসিকগণ আরো বলেন যে বিখ্যাত শিয়া নেতা ও রসূলের বংশধর শরীফ আর-রাদী ও আল-মুরতাদা ও উক্ত ঘোষণা পত্রে স্বাক্ষর করেছেন। কিন্তু ইবন খলদুন মনে করেন এ সকল লোকের সাক্ষ্য বিশ্বাসযোগ্য নয়। কারণ তাঁরা অনেকেই ছিলেন আব্বাসীদের সমর্থক আর তাঁরা বাগদাদে জনসাধারণের মধ্যে প্রচলিত গল্প অনুসারে ফাতিমীয়দের সম্বন্ধে ঐ ঘোষণাপত্রে নিন্দাবাদ লিপিবদ্ধ করেন। ঐতিহাসিকগণ বিনা বিচারে উক্ত ঘোষণাপত্র তাঁদের বইয়ে উল্লেখ করেছেন। এর সত্যতা বিচারের কোন চেষ্টাই তাঁরা করেননি। এর পর মরক্কোর ইদ্রিসী বংশ সম্বন্ধে যে সব অলীক কাহিনী প্রচলিত আছে ইবন খলদুন তারও উল্লেখ করেন।

বহু যোগ্য লোক এবং দক্ষ ঐতিহাসিক এসব গল্প ও কাহিনীর ব্যাপারে ভুল করেছেন। দুর্বল ও অপটু লোকেরা এসব জিনিস উপরোক্ত লোকদের কাছ থেকে

৫। ঐ, পৃঃ ১৩—১৪।

৬। ঐতিহাসিকগণ বলেন যে হারুনুর রশীদের ভগ্নী আব্বাসার সহিত বার্মাকী উজির জাফরের গোপন প্রেম বার্মাকীদের পতনের কারণ।

৭। মুকাদ্দিমা, ১ম খণ্ড, পঃ ১৯—২০।

শিখেছেন। দক্ষ ঐতিহাসিকগণ নিজেরাই বিনা বাছবিচারে এ সব গল্প গ্রহণ করেছেন এবং এভাবে এসব গল্প তাদের লেখায় ঢুকেছে। এর ফলে ইতিহাসবিদ্যা অর্থহীন ও বিশৃঙখল হয়ে পড়েছে; এর চর্চাকারিগণ চতুর্দিকে হাতড়াতে শুরু করেছে। ইতিহাস বিদ্যা জনসাধারণের আওতার বিষয় বলে বিবেচিত হয়েছে। ঐতিহাসিকের কর্তব্য সম্বন্ধে ইবন খলদুন বলেছেন:

"সুতরাং আজ এ বিষয়ের পণ্ডিতকে রাজনীতির মূলনীতি, বিভিন্ন বস্তুর স্বভাব, লোকদের চালচলন, চরিত্র, প্রথা, ধর্মীয়দল, মতবাদ ও অন্যান্য প্রত্যেক জিনিস সম্পর্কে বিভিন্ন জাতি, স্থান ও কালের পার্থক্য জানা একান্ত আবশ্যক। এসব ব্যাপার সম্পর্কে তাঁকে বর্তমান কালের অবস্থার সম্যক জ্ঞান রাখতে হবে। তিনি অবশ্যই বর্তমান ও অতীতের সাদৃশ্য ও বৈসাদৃশ্য তুলনা করে দেখাবেন। কোন কোন ব্যাপারে সাদৃশ্যের কারণ আবার অপরাপর ব্যাপারে বৈসাদৃশ্যের কারণ ও অবশ্য তাঁকে জানতে হবে। বিভিন্ন রাজবংশ ও ধর্মীয়দলের বিসদৃশ মূল ও প্রারম্ভ সম্পর্কে, যে সব কারণ ও মতলব এদের জন্ম দিয়েছে এবং যে সকল লোক এদেরকে সমর্থন যুগিয়েছে তাদের অবস্থা ও ইতিহাস সম্পর্কে ও তাঁকে ওয়াকেফহাল হতে হবে। প্রতি ঘটনার কারণ সম্পর্কে পূর্ণ জ্ঞান লাভ অবশ্যই তাঁর লক্ষ্য হতে হবে এবং প্রতি ঘটনার উৎপত্তি সম্পর্কেও তাঁর জ্ঞান থাকতে হবে। তারপর যে সব মূলনীতি তাঁর জানা আছে তার সাহায্যে তাঁকে গতানুগতিক তথ্যকে ঝালাই করে নিতে হবে। যদি ঐ তথ্য এসব পরীক্ষা-নীরীক্ষায় উৎরে যায় তবে সেটা নির্ভুল অন্যথায় ঐতিহাসিককে মেকী বলে তাকে প্রত্যাখ্যান করতে হবে। এই কারণেই অতীতের তাবারী, বুখারী, ও তৎপূর্ববর্তী ইবন ইসহাক ও অন্য মুসলিম ধর্মীয় আলেমগণ ইতিহাসবিদ্যার কদর করতেন। ইবন ইসহাক ও অন্য আলেমগণ ইতিহাস চর্চায় মশগুল থাকতে পছন্দ করতেন। কিন্তু বহু পণ্ডিত লোক ইতিহাসবিদ্যার গুঢ় তত্ত্ব বিস্মৃত হয়েছেন। এর ফলে এটা একটা মূর্খের পেশা বলে গণ্য হয়েছে। সাধারণ লোক ও যাদের এ বিষয়ে কোন দৃঢ় ভিত্তিগত জ্ঞান নেই তারা ইতিহাস পাঠ ও চর্চাকে নিতান্ত সহজ ব্যাপার মনে করে এর অভ্যন্তরে প্রবেশ করে ছেলেমি করেছে। "ফলে, বাইরের জিনিস দলের জিনিসের মধ্যে ঢুকে পড়েছে, বাদামের সঙ্গে খোসার অংশ বিশেষ মিশ্রিত হয়ে গেছে, সত্য মিথ্যার দ্বারা দুষিত হয়ে পড়েছে।"[৮]

৮। ঐ, পৃঃ ২৭। উদ্ধৃত অংশের মূল আরবীটি নিম্নরূপ:

فاذا يحتاج صاحب هذا الفن الى العلم بقواعد السياسة وطبائع
الموجودات واختلاف الامم والبقاع والاعصار فى السيد والاخلاق والعوائد
والنحل والمذاهب وسائر الاحوال والاحاطة بالحاضر من ذالك و مماثلة
ما بينه و بين الغائب من الوفاق او بون ما بينهما من الخلاف و تعليل
المتفق منها والمختلف والقيام على اصول الدول والملل و مبادى ظهورها
و اسباب حدوثها و دواعى كونها و احوال القائمين بها واخبارهم حتى يكون

ইতিহাস বিদ্যার আরেকটি প্রধান ত্রুটি এই যে যুগের পরিবর্তনের সাথে সাথে জাতি ও বংশের অবস্থারও যে পরিবর্তন ঘটে একথা অনেকে ভুলে যায়। এ দোষ সহজে ধরা পড়ে না এবং অতি অল্পসংখ্যক লোকই এ সম্পর্কে অবগত আছে। পৃথিবীর জাতিসমূহের অবস্থা, তাদের আচার ব্যবহার, ও রীতিনীতি কখনও অপরিবর্তনীয় নয়। সময়ের পরিবর্তনের সাথে সাথে এসব অবস্থার পরিবর্তন হয়। পৃথিবীর প্রাচীন জাতি সমূহের রাষ্ট্রনীতি, শিল্প, ভাষা, রীতিনীতি, আচার অনুষ্ঠান যে রকম ছিল পরবর্তী যুগে অন্য জাতির উদ্ভব হয়ে ঐ সকল আচার ব্যবহার ও রীতিনীতির পরিবর্তন ঘটেছে। কিন্তু অর্বাচীন লোক এ অবস্থার পরিবর্তনের বিষয় না জেনে বর্তমান কালের সম্বন্ধে তার যে জ্ঞান আছে তারই আলোতে সে পুরাতন যুগের তত্ত্বকে বিচার করে। অথচ এ দুয়ের মধ্যে পার্থক্য অনেক। এভাবে সে ভ্রমে পতিত হয়।

ইবন খলদুন আরো বলেন যে এক যুগে ইতিহাস বিদ্যার যে উদ্দেশ্য থাকে অপর যুগে তার সে উদ্দেশ্য পরিবর্তিত হতে পারে। এর ফলে ইতিহাসের বিষয় বস্তুর যথেষ্ঠ পরিবর্তন ঘটে। কিন্তু পরবর্তী যুগের ঐতিহাসিকগণ প্রায়শঃ না বুঝে পূর্ববর্তী ঐতিহাসিকদের লিখন পদ্ধতি চোখ বুজে নকল করেন; যেমন ইবন খলদুনের সময়কার ঐতিহাসিকগণ উমাইয়া ও আব্বাসীয় যুগের ঐতিহাসিকদের হুবহু নকল করে থাকেন।

উপরোক্ত আলোচনা থেকে স্পষ্ট প্রতীয়মান হবে যে ইবন খলদুন ইতিহাস বিদ্যাকে কিংবদন্তী ও কাহিনীর পর্যায় থেকে মুক্ত করে নির্দিষ্ট আইন কানুন দ্বারা শাসিত একটি সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত বিদ্যায় উন্নীত করে গেছেন।

مستوعبا لا سباب كل حادث واقفا على اصول كل خبر و حينئذ يعرض خبر المنقول علي ما عنده من القواعد والاصول فان وافقها وجرى على مقتضاها كان صحيحا و الا زيفه واستغنى عنه و ما استكبر القدماء علم التاريخ الا لذالك حتى انتحله الطبرى والبخاري وابن اسحق من قبلهما وامثالهم من علماء الامه وقد ذهل الكثير عن هذا السرفيه حتي صار انتحاله مجهلة واستخف العوام و من لارسوخ له فى المعارف مطالعته و حمله والخوض فيه والتطفل عليه فاختلط المرعى بالهمل و اللباب بالقشر والصادق بالكاذب -

বংগীয় মুসলিম লীগ বার্ষিক অধিবেশনের সভাপতি হিসাবে ব্যারিষ্টার আবদুল রসুল

মাহবুব আলম*

ব্যারিষ্টার আবদুল রসুল ১৮৭০ খৃষ্টাব্দে কুমিল্লা জেলায় এক সম্ভ্রান্ত পরিবারে জন্মগ্রহণ করেন এবং ১৮৯৮ খৃষ্টাব্দে অক্সফোর্ড হতে বি, সি, এল, ডিগ্রি লাভ করার পর কলকাতা হাই কোর্টে আইন ব্যবসায় শুরু করেন। বিংশ শতাব্দীর প্রথম ও দ্বিতীয় দশকে তিনি প্রাদেশিক রাজনীতি ক্ষেত্রে বিশেষ সক্রিয় অংশ গ্রহণ করেন। তিনি ইণ্ডিয়ান ন্যাশনাল কংগ্রেসের সমর্থক ছিলেন এবং সুরেন্দ্র নাথ ব্যানার্জির নেতৃত্বাধীনে বংগ-ভংগ ও অন্যান্য অংগ্রেসী আন্দোলনে অংশ গ্রহণ করেছিলেন। প্রথম দিকে তাই তিনি স্বভাবতঃই নিখিল ভারত মুসলিম লীগের বিরোধী ছিলেন। কিন্তু তৎকালীন আরও অনেকের ন্যায় তিনিও শেষ পর্য্যন্ত মুসলিম লীগের নীতির প্রয়োজনীয়তা ও যথার্থতা উপলব্ধি করতে সমর্থ হয়েছিলেন ; এবং ১৯১৬ খৃষ্টাব্দে বংগীয় প্রাদেশিক মুসলিম লীগের বার্ষিক অধিবেশনে সভাপতিত্ব করেছিলেন। একথা আজ অনেকেরই হয়ত স্মরণ নেই, তাই তৎকালীন জনপ্রিয় ও প্রভাবশালী পত্রিকা **সঞ্জীবনীতে** প্রকাশিত তাঁর সেই মুসলিম লীগ অধিবেশনের সভাপতি হিসাবে প্রদত্ত ভাষণ এখানে উদ্ধৃত করা হল।[১]

তাঁর বক্তৃতা হতে মোটামুটি চারটি মর্ম অবগত হওয়া যায়। প্রথমতঃ "এক সময়ে" একজন "কংগ্রেসওয়ালা" হিসেবে তাঁকে যে তাঁর "সহধর্মী ভ্রাতারা" অপছন্দ করতেন, এবিষয়ে তিনি সচেতন ছিলেন। বক্তৃতার প্রথম ভাগেই তাই তিনি কিছুটা নিজের অনুসৃত নীতির ব্যাখ্যা দিতে চেষ্টা করেছেন। দ্বিতীয়তঃ, মুসলমানদের সর্বতোভাবে শিক্ষিত না হয়ে রাজনীতি চর্চায় প্রবৃত্ত হওয়া উচিত নয় এই ধরণের একটি মনোভাবের সমালোচনা করে তিনি অতি অল্প সময়ের মধ্যে রাজনীতিক্ষেত্রে মুসলিম লীগের সাফল্যের প্রশংসা করেছেন।[২] প্রসংগতঃ উল্লেখযোগ্য যে গোড়াতেই কংগ্রেসী মহল মুসলিম লীগ একটি প্রতিক্রিয়াশীল, রাজনৈতিক-আন্দোলন-বিরোধী ও শাসক-পোষ্য একটি প্রতিষ্ঠান বলে অপপ্রচার করতে থাকে। ফলে কিছু সংখ্যক তরুণ অথচ স্বদেশ প্রেমিক মুসলিম যুবক মুসলিম লীগ হতে দূরে সরে দাড়ায়। আবদুল রসুলের বক্তৃতার এই অংশটি হয়ত তাঁরই স্বীয় অভিজ্ঞতা ও বিগত মনোভাবের পারোক্ষ প্রতিধ্বনি। তৃতীয়তঃ, এই উপমহাদেশীয় মুসলমানদের তৎকালীন অবস্থায় রাজভক্ত (Loyal) থাকাই যে বাঞ্ছনীয় ব্যারিষ্টার আবদুল রসুল একথাটির প্রতি জোর দিয়েছেন। বলা বাহুল্য

* জনাব মাহবুব আলম ঢাকা গভর্ণমেন্ট কলেজে ইতিহাসের অধ্যাপক।

১। সঞ্জীবনী পত্রিকার এই সংখ্যাটি বর্তমানে এই পত্রিকার প্রধান সম্পাদক ডঃ মোহাম্মদ মোহর আলীর নিকট সংরক্ষিত আছে। তিনি এই তথ্যটির প্রতি লেখকের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করেন।

২। বক্তৃতায় "রাজনীতি ও মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়" প্রসংগটি দেখুন।

উনবিংশ শতাব্দীতে স্যার সৈয়দ আহমদ খান, নওয়াব আবদুল লতীফ, ও সৈয়দ আমীর আলী প্রমুখ মুসলিম জননায়কগণ ও তৎকালীন পরিস্থিতিতে মুসলমানদের পক্ষে রাজভক্ত থাকা ও শিক্ষা দীক্ষায় নিজেদেরকে উন্নত করার উপদেশই দিয়েছিলেন। রাজভক্ত থাকা মানেই যে স্বদেশ প্রেম বা জাতীয়তা বোধের অভাব নয়, এবং নিখিল ভারত মুসলিম লীগ যে একটি রাজনীতি বিরোধী প্রতিষ্ঠান ছিলনা, ব্যারিষ্টার আবদুল রসুলের বক্তৃতায় তার স্পষ্ট প্রমাণ পাওয়া যায়।

১৯১৩ খৃষ্টাব্দে নিখিল ভারত মুসলিম লীগ স্বরাজ অর্জন তাদের প্রধান লক্ষ্য হিসেবে ঘোষণা করেন। এর পর তরুণ নেতা (কায়েদে আজম) মোহাম্মদ আলী জিন্নাহর নেতৃত্বে মুসলিম লীগ ও কংগ্রেসের মধ্যে সমঝোতার চেষ্টা চলে। মুসলিম লীগ অধিবেশনে ব্যারিষ্টার আবদুল রসুলের সভাপতির আসন গ্রহণ হয়ত এরই স্বাভাবিক পরিণতি। তবে স্মরণ রাখা দরকার, প্রাদেশিক মুসলিম লীগের এই অধিবেশনের প্রায় আট মাস পরে লাক্ষ্ণৌ চুক্তি সম্পাদিত হয়েছিল। দুঃখের বিষয়, এর অল্পকাল পর ১৯১৭ খৃষ্টাব্দে ৩১শে জুলাই আবদুল রসুল সাহেব ইন্তেকাল করেন।

বঙ্গীয় মুসলমান লীগ

সভাপতি মিঃ এ রসুলের বক্তৃতা

গত ২৪শে এপ্রিল পূর্বাহ্ণে বঙ্গীয় মুসলমান লীগের দ্বিতীয় বার্ষিক অধিবেশন হয়। মিঃ এ রসুল [সভাপতির আসন গ্রহন করেন।] সমবেত প্রতিনিধি [দের উদ্দেশ্যে] সভাপতি মহাশয় বলেন,

আপনারা আমাকে সভাপতি [মনোনীত] করিয়া বিশেষ গৌরব দান করিয়াছেন। [গৌরব] শব্দটি আমি ইচ্ছাপূর্বক ব্যবহার করিয়াছি। এক সময়ে আমার সহধর্ম্মী ভ্রাতারা [আমাকে] ভীষণ লোক বলিয়া মনে করিতেন। [আমার] রাজনৈতিক মত তাহাদের কিংবা [তাহাদের] আত্মীয়বর্গের স্বার্থবিরোধী বলিয়া বিবেচিত হইত। আমার অপরাধ এই যে আমি একজন "কংগ্রেসওয়ালা"। ইহা যে কেন আমার দোষ বলিয়া ধরা হইত আমি তাহা বুঝিতে পারি না। উত্তর পশ্চিম ও পঞ্জাবের কোনো কোনো কাগজ আমাকে সমাজদ্রোহী বলিয়া ঘোষণা করিয়াছেন। সমস্ত নিন্দা ও গালাগালি উপেক্ষা করিয়া আমি আমার আপন মতেই অবিচলিত রহিয়াছি। আমি চিরকালই বলিতেছি যে, ভারতবর্ষ হিন্দু ও মুসলমান উভয়ের মাতৃভূমি, এই উভয়ের সম্মিলিত চেষ্টা ব্যতীত দেশের অভ্যুত্থান অসম্ভব।

মুসলমান জননায়কদিগের প্রতি আমি কখনো কখনো উত্তেজনাপূর্ণ বাক্য ব্যবহার করিয়াছি। সেই সমালোচনার মূলে, (১) আমার ব্যক্তিগত মতের অবিচলিততা এবং (২) সাধারণের মঙ্গলকামনা ব্যতীত আর কিছুই ছিল না।

আমার সহধর্ম্মীরা রাজনীতি ক্ষেত্রে কতখানি উন্নতি করিয়াছেন তাহা বুঝাইবার নিমিত্ত আমি এই অপ্রিয় প্রসঙ্গের অবতারনা করিয়াছি।

রাজনীতি ও মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়

আমার আনন্দ এই যে আমি যে সম্প্রদায় ভুক্ত সেই মুসলমানগণ এক্ষনে সর্বত্রই উৎসাহের সহিত রাজনীতি চর্চায় প্রবৃত্ত হইয়াছেন। আমি অসঙ্কোচে বলিতেছি যে, আমাদের নায়কগণ এতকাল এই আলোচনা হইতে দূরে থাকিয়া ভুল করিয়াছেন।

তাঁহারা এই ভুল না করিলে মুসলমান সম্প্রদায় এতদিনে আরও উন্নত হইত। এইতো সেদিন ১৯০৬ সালে ঢাকা নগরের ভারতীয় মুসলমান লীগের জন্ম হইয়াছে, একবার ভাবিয়া দেখুন এই অল্প কয়েক বৎসরে এই সমিতি কেমন ক্ষিপ্রপদে অগ্রসর হইয়াছে।

আমরা এই কথাই শুনিতাম যে প্রথমে আমরা সুশিক্ষিত হইব তারপরে রাজনীতি আলোচনা আরম্ভ করিব। বঙ্গ দেশে এই প্রবাদ বচন আছে "না কাঁদিলে মা দুধ দেয় না"। রাজনীতির ক্ষেত্রে পৃথিবীর ইতিহাসে দেখি না চাহিয়া কেহ কোথায়ও কিছু পায় নাই। কোনো অধিকার পাওয়ার পূর্ব্বে দলবদ্ধ হইতে হইবে, আন্দোলন জাগাইতে হইবে, তবে অধিকার পাওয়া যাইবে। মুসলমান লীগের উদ্ভবের পুর্বে দুভাগ্যক্রমে মুসলমানেরা এই প্রকারের কোনো চেষ্টাই করেন নাই। এখনে লীগ এই সম্প্রদায়ের একটি শক্তির ক্ষেত্র হইয়াছে। কিছুমাত্র অতিরঞ্জন না করিয়া আমি ইহা বলিতে পারি যে, ১০ বৎসরে মুসলমান লীগ অনুপাতে ৩০ বৎসর বয়সের কংগ্রেস অপেক্ষা বেশী কার্য্য করিয়াছেন। রাজনীতি চর্চ্চাকে যাহারা অবজ্ঞা করিতেন তাহারা এক্ষনে ইহার ফল দেখিতে পাইতেছেন। রাজনীতি চর্চ্চা ব্যতীত আমরা আমাদের ঐক্য অনুভব করিতে পারি না। রাজনীতি আলোচনা ভিন্ন আমরা টিঁকিয়া থাকিতে পারি না।

আপনারা যদি বঙ্গীয় মুসলমান লীগকে একটি শক্তির উৎস করিয়া তুলিতে ইচ্ছা করেন তাহা হইলে ঔদাসিন্য ও জড়তা পরিহার করুন।

গ্রামের স্বাস্থ্য

প্রতিনিধিবর্গের অনেকেই বাঙ্গালা [দেশের] পল্লী-গ্রামবাসী। আপনারা সকলেই জানেন [যে] দেশের স্বাস্থ্য শোচনীয় অবস্থা প্রাপ্ত হই[য়াছে।] ম্যালেরিয়া ও অপর নানা রোগে সহস্র লোক মৃত্যুমুখে পতিত হইতেছে। [আমাদের] সকল ব্যাধি যত্নের ফলে নিবারিত হইতে [পারে]। গ্রামে পুস্করিণী বা কূপ না থাকাতে গ্রামবাসী[রা] নবেম্বর হইতে জুলাই পর্য্যন্ত কয়েক মাস কর্দ্দমাক্ত জলপান করিয়া থাকে। দেশের অধিকাংশ স্থলে যাতায়াতের উপযোগী রাস্তা বা খাল [নাই]। লীগ এই অসুবিধা দূর করিবার ভার গ্রহণ করুন। লীগের সদস্যগণ এই উদ্দেশ্যে একটি সাবকমিটি গঠন করুন। বঙ্গীয় প্রাদেশিক সমিতিও এই উদ্দেশ্যে একটি কমিটি গঠন করিয়াছেন। এই দুই কমিটি সমবেতভাবে কার্য্য করিয়া বঙ্গদেশের দুর্গতি দূর করুন।

সরকারী চাকুরী

বাঙ্গালার মুসলমানদিগের সরকারী চাকুরী পাইবার লালসা অত্যন্ত অধিক হইয়াছে। আমার মনে হয় দারিদ্র হেতুই তাহাদিগকে এই পথ গ্রহণ করিতে হয়। কিন্তু এখন প্রতিযোগিতা বড়ই দুরূহ হইয়া উঠিয়াছে, সরকারী চাকুরী পাওয়া এখন অনায়াস নহে। আমি আমাদিগের যুবকগণকে এই উপদেশ দিতেছি যে, তাহারা অসার সম্মানের কল্পনা ছাড়িয়া যৌথভাবে ছোট ছোট ব্যবসায়ে ও কৃষিকার্য্যে প্রবৃত্ত হউন।

যুদ্ধ ও মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়

ইংলণ্ড যখন তুরস্কের বিরুদ্ধে যুদ্ধ ঘোষণা করেন তখন ভারতীয় মুসলমানগণ ঘোর সমস্যায় পড়িলেন। একদিকে তাহারা রাজার প্রতি ভক্তি দেখাইতে বাধ্য, অন্য দিকে তাহারা মুসলমানদের খলিফা তুরস্কের সুলতানের প্রতি সহানুভূতি করিয়া থাকেন। যে দুই রাজা অতীতে চিরকাল বন্ধুত্ব রক্ষা করিয়া চলিয়াছিল, তাঁহারা বর্তমান যুদ্ধের সময়ে বন্ধুত্ব রক্ষা করিতে পারিলেন না বলিয়া ভারতীয় মুসলমানগণ ব্যথিত হইয়াছেন। যুদ্ধ ঘোষিত হইলে কতিপয় মুসলমান নায়ক অতিরিক্ত ঔৎসুক্যহেতু প্রকাশ্য সভামণ্ডপে রাজভক্তি প্রচারে প্রবৃত্ত হইলেন, কেহ কেহ সংবাদ-পত্রে তুরস্কের কলঙ্ক রটনা করিলেন।

এতদ্বারা তাহারা গভর্ণমেন্টের উপকার না করিয়া অপকারই করিয়াছেন। রাজভক্তি ও কপটতা একই অর্থবোধক নহে। মুসলমানেরা রাজভক্ত নহে এই কথা বলা যেমন মিথ্যা, তুরস্কের প্রতি তাহাদের সহানুভূতি নাই তাহা বলাও তেমনি মিথ্যা। ভারতীয় মুসলমানগণ রাজভক্ত না হইয়াই পারেনা। ইহার যদি আর কোনো কারণ না থাকে, ব্যক্তিগত স্বার্থের জন্যেও তাহারা রাজভক্ত হইবে। গভর্ণমেন্ট তাহাদিগকে আশ্রয় দিয়া রক্ষা করিতেছেন, তজ্জন্য তাহারা গভর্ণমেন্টের প্রতি কৃতজ্ঞ না হইয়া পারে না। এই সমস্যার সময়ে গভর্ণমেন্টের কোন কারণে মুসলমানদিগকে উত্তেজিত হইবার সুযোগ দেওয়া উচিত নহে।

সৈন্যদলে প্রবেশ

আর্মেনিয়ান, ইহুদী এমনকি নিগ্রোগণও সৈন্য দলে ভর্তি হইবার অধিকার পাইয়াছে। বর্তমান যুদ্ধের সময়ে তাহাদিগকে এই অধিকার দেওয়া হইয়াছে, কিন্তু আমাদের আবেদন উপেক্ষিত হইল। ফরাসী গভর্ণমেন্ট তাঁহাদের প্রজাদিগকে এই অধিকার প্রদান করিয়াছেন। আমাদের যুবকগণ এই অধিকারে বঞ্চিত হইয়া কি মনে করিবে? গভর্ণমেন্ট এই বিষয়ে যে অভিমত পোষন করেন, তাহা কোনো বিজ্ঞ রাজনৈতিকের অনুমোদিত হইতে পারে না।

বহিঃশত্রুর আক্রমণ হইতে দেশ রক্ষা করিবার নিমিত্ত আমাদিগের যুবকগণকে যুদ্ধ শিক্ষা দেওয়া উচিত, যুদ্ধ শিক্ষা তো দূরের কথা, তাহারা ধন-সম্পত্তি স্ত্রী-পুত্রকে ডাকাতের হাত হইতে রক্ষা করিবার জন্য আগ্নেয়াস্ত্র ব্যবহার করিতে পারেনা। অস্ত্র আইন এত কঠোর বলিয়াই হত্যাযুক্ত ডাকাতির এমন বাহুল্য ঘটিতেছে।

আবদ্ধকরণ

যেরূপ নির্বিচারে খানা-তল্লাস, আটক করা, সংবাদ-পত্র প্রচার বন্ধ চলিতেছে তাহাতে লোকের মনে উত্তেজনা না জন্মিয়াই পারে না। মহম্মদ আলী, সৌকত আলী এবং মৌলনা আজাদ প্রভৃতির ন্যায় অতি সম্ভ্রান্ত ব্যক্তিগণকে আবদ্ধ করা হইয়াছে। হয়তো গভর্ণমেন্ট তাঁহাদিগকে আটক করিবার পক্ষে যুক্তিযুক্ত কারণ পাইয়া থাকিবেন। কিন্তু আমাদের অভিজ্ঞতা হইতে ইহাও বলিতে পারি যে, পুলিশ রিপোর্টের উপর নির্ভর করিয়া গভর্ণমেন্ট কার্য্য করিয়া থাকেন, কিন্তু পুলিশের রিপোর্ট সর্বদা বিশ্বাসযোগ্য [নহে]। এইরূপ লোকপূজ্য ব্যক্তিগণকে আবদ্ধ [করিবার পূর্বে] গভর্ণমেন্ট অতি বিশ্বাসী ব্যক্তি [দ্বারা] তদন্ত করাইলে ভাল হইত।

যুদ্ধ আরম্ভ হইবার পর হইতে একে একে অনেকগুলি মুসলমান সংবাদ-পত্র উঠিয়া গিয়াছে। অতিরিক্ত জামিনের বোঝা বহন করিতে অসমর্থ হওয়াতে এইরূপ ঘটিয়াছে। অদৃষ্টের ফের এই যে, মুসলমানেরাই এই নূতন মুদ্রাযন্ত্র আইন সমর্থন করিয়াছিলেন।

স্বায়ত্ত্ব শাসন

জাতীয় মহাসমিতি ও মুসলমান লীগ উভয়েই স্বায়ত্ত্ব-শাসন পাইতে চাহেন। আমরা শায়ত্ত্ব-শাসন পাইব, একথা এখন সকলেই, এমনকি লণ্ডনের টাইমস পত্রিকাও বলিয়া থ কেন।

আমাদের কপালে ঐ সৌভাগ্যলাভ কবে হইবে, সেই কথার সোজা উত্তর কেহই বলেন না। যে উত্তর দেওয়া হয় তাহা অস্পষ্ট। বলা হয়---"যবে তোমরা উপযুক্ত-হইবে।" আমরা কিরূপ স্বায়ত্ত্ব-শাসন পাইব তাহারও কোন স্পষ্ট উত্তর কেহ প্রদান করেন না। যাহা শুনা যায় তাহা হইতে সুস্পষ্ট ধারণা করা দুরূহ। শুনা যায়,

"সিঁড়ির পর সিঁড়ি ভাঙ্গিয়া আমাদিগকে একটু একটু করিয়া স্বায়ত্ত্ব-শাসনের উচ্চলোকে উঠিতে হইবে।" কেহ কেহ প্রবোধ দিয়া থাকেন---"হাঁ তোমাদিগের তো স্বায়ত্ত্ব-শাসন কিছু কিছু আছে, ব্যবস্থাপক সভায় তোমাদের প্রতিনিধিরা আছেন।" এই ব্যবস্থাপক-দিগের কতখানি ক্ষমতা তাহা আমাদের সকলেরই জানা আছে। ব্যবস্থাপকগণ প্রশ্ন তুলিতে পারেন, প্রস্তাব উত্থাপন করিতেও পারেন। কিন্তু প্রেসিডেন্ট ইচ্ছা করিলে তাঁহাকে নিবৃত্ত করিতে পারেন। ব্যবস্থাপকগণের বলার সময় এমন ছাটা কাটা নিয়মে বাঁধা যে অনেক সময় ব্যবস্থাপক কিছু না বলাই শ্রেয় মনে করেন। এই সকল ব্যবস্থাপক সভায় যে কাজ হইয়া থাকে তাহা না হইলেও গভর্ণমেন্টের কোনো ক্ষতি-বৃদ্ধি নাই। এই যে, স্বায়ত্ত্ব-শাসনের আবছায়া রহিয়াছে ইহার উপর আমার বিন্দুমাত্র আস্থা নাই। ভারতবাসী গভর্ণমেন্টকে এই আবছায়া কাউন্সিলগুলি তুলিয়া দিতে অথবা পূরাপুরি স্বায়ত্ত্ব-শাসন দিতে বলুন। কানাডা অষ্ট্রেলিয়া বা দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকার যেমন স্বায়ত্ত্ব-শাসন আছে, আমরা তেমন স্বায়ত্ত্ব-শাসন পাইতে চাই।

ব্যবস্থাপক সভা পূরাপুরি নির্বাচিত সভ্যদের দ্বারা গঠিত হইবে। মন্ত্রিসভা ব্যবস্থাপক সভার অনুমোদন মতে চলিবে, মন্ত্রি সভাকে তাহার কার্য্যের জন্য ব্যবস্থাপক সভার নিকটে জবাবদিহি করিতে হইবে।

ভারতবাসীর যদি আত্মসম্মান বোধ থাকে, ভারতবাসী যদি নৈতিক ও আর্থিক উন্নতি লাভের জন্য অভিলাষী হইয়া থাকেন তাহা হইলে সর্বাঙ্গীন স্বায়ত্ত্ব-শাসনই দাবী করুন।

সঞ্জীবনী, কলিকাতা, বৃহস্পতিবার,
১৪ই বৈশাখ, সন ১৩২৩ সাল।
(Calcutta, Thursday, 27th April, 1916)

সৈয়দ আমীর আলীর স্মৃতিকথা *

(MEMOIRS OF THE RT. HONORABLE SYED AMEER ALI)

অনুবাদেঃ **রাশীদুল হাসান** **

ভূমিকা

(আর্নেষ্ট এইচ. গ্রীফিন লিখিত)

সৈয়দ আমীর আলীর অনেক স্মৃতির মাঝে একটি আমার মনে চির স্মরণীয় থাকবে। এটি তাঁর ইংলণ্ডের মনোরম আবাসবাটি পোলিংফোল্ড ম্যানরের (Pollingfold Manor) স্মৃতি। সে এক মহিমামণ্ডিত গ্রীষ্ম দিনের শেষ লগ্ন---অমি তাঁর সঙ্গে দাঁড়িয়েছিলাম জানালার পাশে---অদূরে দেখা যাচ্ছিল ফুল বাগান। ফুলের গন্ধে বাতাস ছিল সুবাসিত, লণ্ডনের সদাব্যস্ত পথের তর্জন-গর্জন ছিল আমাদের শ্রবণ-সীমার অনেক দূরে এবং এই শান্ত সন্ধ্যার সৌন্দর্য্য ছিল অবিভ্রান্ত;---শুধু ছিল পাখীর আনন্দ কূজন, গো-পালের হাম্বাধ্বনি, আর ছিল বনানীর তরুলতা ভেদ করে আসা বাতাসের শন্ শন্ স্বর। তিনি জানালার পর্দা টেনে দিলেন আর তাঁর মুখমণ্ডলে আলো পড়ল। আমি তাঁর মহিমাদীপ্ত চেহারার বিশিষ্টতায় মুগ্ধ হলাম। তাঁর দৈর্ঘ্যের স্বল্পতা তাঁর চেহারার সার্বিক মহিমাকে কোথাও ক্ষুন্ন করেনি। তাঁর অভিজাত মুখাবয়বের উপর লৌহধূসর কেশের শিরস্ত্রাণ আর শুভ্র গুম্ফযুগল তাঁকে এক বিরল গৌরব দান করেছিল।

আমি যে উদ্দেশ্যে তাঁর কাছে এসেছিলাম, সেই কথা শুরু করলাম এবং তার পর বিশেষ থেকে সাধারণ আলাপে আমরা আমাদের ছড়িয়ে দিলাম। আমি এই বিশিষ্ট বাড়ীর ইতিহাস সম্পর্কে কিছু খুঁটিনাটি প্রশ্ন করলাম। ছয় শতাব্দীরও অধিক আগে প্রথম এডওয়ার্ডের আমলে এই বাড়ীর মালিক ছিলেন উইলিয়াম ডি পোলিংফোল্ড (William de Pollingfold)। এই মুহূর্তেই আমার মনে পড়ল সেই মহান রাজার নীতিবাণী---"বিশ্বাসে বলীয়ান হও"---যা তিনি খোদিত করেছিলেন তাঁর উজ্জ্বল ঢালে। সঙ্গে সঙ্গে এও ভেবে নিলাম---গৃহের বর্তমান অধিকারীকে এই নীতিবাক্য

* This ia a free Bengali translation of Rt. Honorable Syed Ameer Ali's **Memoirs**, published in the **Islamic Culture** for 1931 and 1932. This translation has been made by arrangement with Dr. S. Razi Wasti, Director, Institute of Historical Research, the University of the Panjab, Lahore, who has been editing the English text together with Ameer Ali's other writings.

** জনাব রাশীদুল হাসান ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ইংরেজী বিভাগের অধ্যাপক।

সুন্দর মানিয়ে গেছে, কেননা সৈয়দ আমীর আলী বিশ্বাসে বলীয়ান ছিলেন---কি ধর্ম-বিশ্বাসে, কি রাজভক্তিতে কিংবা দেশপ্রেমে। মাত্র এক বৎসর পরে যখন পাকা ফসল কৃষকের কাস্তের সামনে লুটিয়ে পড়ার সময় এল, সৈয়দ আমীর আলী পূর্ণ বয়সে পূর্ণ মর্যাদায় আত্মীয়স্বজন পরিবৃত্ত অবস্থায় চির নিদ্রায় নিদ্রিত হলেন।

বিচারপতি হিসেবে সৈয়দ আমীর আলীর কর্মজীবন প্রসঙ্গে আশা করি কোন যোগ্যতর লেখক একদিন লিখবেন। আমি এখানে তাঁকে একজন প্রতিভাশালী লেখক, উৎপীড়িতের প্রতি সহানুভূতিশীল সংগ্রামী যোদ্ধা এবং দরিদ্র ও নিঃসহায়ের পরম বন্ধু হিসেবে দেখেছি। তার সাহিত্য কর্মের মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য হল: The Spirit of Islam এবং A Short History of the Saracenes। প্রথমটি ইসলাম ধর্ম সম্পর্কে এক বিদগ্ধ ব্যাখ্যা, যাতে তিনি দেখিয়েছেন যে ইসলামের শিক্ষাদর্শ সম্পূর্ণ আধুনিক জীবনোপযোগী; এবং দ্বিতীয়টি আরব জাতির ইতিহাস সম্বন্ধে এক আকর-গ্রন্থ বিশেষ। এবং যে কেউ এই প্রসঙ্গে বিস্তৃততর কিছু লিখতে চাইবেন তার পক্ষে এই গ্রন্থ অপরিহার্য। তিনি ইংরেজি ভাষার সুদক্ষ কারিগর ছিলেন। তাঁর কলমের ডগায় ছবি ও ছন্দোময় বাক্যাংশ সমূহ সহজেই জন্ম নিত এবং তিনি প্রায় আবেদন নিবেদনের পত্রাবলীতে যে সব সংশোধন করে দিতেন তাতে রূঢ় গদ্যময় পত্রাবলীর ভাষাও সাহিত্য মণ্ডিত হ'য়ে উঠত। মুসলিম রাষ্ট্রের প্রতি বৃটিশ সরকারের নীতি প্রসঙ্গে তিনি The Times পত্রিকায় যে সব পত্র লিখতেন তা অন্যান্য জননেতার মতের সঙ্গে প্রায়ই মিলত না। বিতর্কমূলক আলোচনায় তিনি ছিলেন ভদ্র ও নম্রভাব, কিন্তু সব সময় কার্যকরী। ইংরেজী ভাষার উপর তার আশ্চর্য অধিকার তাঁকে দুর্দম প্রতিযোগীর শক্তি দান করেছিল। সূক্ষ্ম জ্ঞানানুভূতি দিয়ে তিনি প্রতিপক্ষের যুক্তিতর্কের মধ্যেকার দুর্বলতা সহজেই ধরে ফেলতেন। ক্ষিপ্র অসিধারী সৈনিক যেমন ভারী গদাধারীকে সহজেই কাবু করে ফেলেন আমীর আলী তেমনি তার প্রতি-পক্ষকে যুক্তিজালে আবদ্ধ করে ফেল্‌তেন। তিনি কখনো এমন কথা বলতেন না যাতে তিনি নিজেই বিব্রত হয়ে পড়বেন; শুধু একবার এক প্রেস-পত্রেই এর ব্যতিক্রম দেখা গেছিল। কোনো লেখক প্রস্তাব করেছিলেন যে কন্‌স্টান্‌টিনোপলকে "মুক্ত শহর" (Free city) বলে ঘোষণা করা হোক এবং জাতিসঙ্ঘের (League of Nations) কার্য্যালয় সেখানে স্থাপন করা হোক। বিদ্যুৎবেগে উত্তর এলো আমীর আলীর থেকে। তিনি স্থির প্রস্তাব জানালেন---জেরুজালেম আরো যোগ্যতর জায়গা, 'যেখান হ'তে বিশ্বশান্তি ও মানব জাতির প্রতি শুভেচ্ছার বাণী প্রায় দু'হাজার বছর আগে উদ্‌বোধিত হয়েছিল।' যখন তাঁকে ইঙ্গিতে এই বলে ভর্ৎসনা করা হ'ল যে তাঁর মত উচ্চ সরকারী পদাধিকারী ব্যক্তির সব সময় সত্য ভাষণ দেয়া ঠিক নয়, তিনি সত্বর জবাব দিলেন, উচ্চ সরকারী পদাধিকারী ব্যক্তি বলেই সত্যভাষণ দান তাঁর এক নৈতিক দায়িত্ব। নীতিবিষয়ক কতকগুলি ব্যাপারে তাঁর সোচ্চার ও বিশিষ্ট মতামতের জন্য তাঁকে বহু পার্থিব সম্মান ও খেতাব থেকে বঞ্চিত করা হয় এবং তা

তিনি সহজ গৌরবেই উপেক্ষা করেছিলেন। তদানীন্তন সরকার তাঁর বহু অমূল্য পরামর্শকে উপেক্ষা করে কেবল যে বহু মানুষের জীবনই বিপন্ন করেছিলেন তাই নয়, বৃটিশ জাতির মর্যাদাও ক্ষুন্ন করেছিলেন।

নবীন তুরস্ক সৈয়দ আমীর আলীর প্রতি আমার্জনীয় অসম্মান প্রদর্শন করলেও তিনি এই একদা সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ মুসলিম শক্তির প্রতি তিক্তভাব পোষণ করেন নাই। এমন কি তাঁর কোন ভক্ত তুরস্কবাসীর প্রতি এজন্য বিষোদ্গার করায় তাকে তিনি সহনশীলতার মনোভাব পোষণ করতে পরামর্শ দিয়েছিলেন।

"বৃটিশ রেড ক্রিসেন্ট সোসাইটি" প্রতিষ্ঠা সৈয়দ আমীর আলীর অন্যতম মহত্তম কীর্তি। তুরস্ক ও ইতালীর মধ্যে ত্রিপোলিতানায় যুদ্ধ বাধলে তিনি লক্ষ্য করলেন যদিও বিভিন্ন রেড ক্রস প্রতিষ্ঠান যুদ্ধাহতদের সেবায় প্রশংসাযোগ্য কাজ করে চলেছেন, তথাপি এমন কোন বৃটিশ সংস্থা নেই যা এই মহতী প্রচেষ্টায় শরীক ও শামিল হ'য়ে যুদ্ধাহত মুসলিমদের সেবায় নিযুক্ত। মহামান্য আগাখান ও বহু ভারতীয় ও ইংরেজ মহানুভব ব্যক্তির সহায়তায় তিনি British Red Crescent Society প্রতিষ্ঠা করলেন। অতঃপর এই প্রতিষ্ঠান বিশ্বের বহুস্থানে নানা জনহিতকর কাজ করেছে। এই প্রতিষ্ঠানের পক্ষ থেকে প্রথম দলটি যায় ত্রিপোলিতানায় এবং সেখানে দু'বছর ধরে বহু আরব যুদ্ধাহতের সেবা করে। সার্জন হিসেবে এই দলের সঙ্গে কাজ করার সৌভাগ্য আমার হয়েছিল; এবং একথা স্মরণ করে আমি মহত্তম আনন্দ পাই যে, কোন প্রকার ধর্মীয় গোঁড়ামী আমাদের কাজে ব্যাঘাত সৃষ্টি করেনি। এই প্রসঙ্গে আমীর আলীর শেষ নির্দেশ আমার স্পষ্টই মনে পড়ে। যখন তাঁর কাছে আমি জানতে চাইলাম—সেবাকার্য কি কেবল মুসলিমদের মধ্যেই সীমাবদ্ধ থাকবে, তিনি উত্তর দিলেন—"Although your first duty is to the Turkish and Arab wounded, you will never turn away poor Christian or Jew, who present himself to you in his hour of need" —যদিও আপনার প্রথম দায়িত্ব তুর্কী ও আরব যুদ্ধাহতদের সেবা, তথাপি কোন বিপন্ন খৃষ্টান বা ঈহুদী আপনাদের শরণাপন্ন হ'য়ে যেন কদাচ বিফল মনোরথ না হন।" এই উদারমনোভাব আমাদের সংস্থার সকলেই শেষ পর্যন্ত অক্ষুন্ন রেখেছিলেন।

বলকান এলাকায় যখন ভয়ঙ্কর যুদ্ধ বেধে যায় তখন প্রাচ্যে আমাদের সোসাইটির পক্ষ থেকে আরো সাহায্য পাঠানর প্রয়োজন দেখা দেয়। ভারতীয় ও ইংরেজ সহযোগীদের সাহায্য পুষ্ট হয়ে Turkish Red Crescent Society-র সেবাকার্য বিপুলভাবে কার্যকারী হয়। অতঃপর মহাসমর তার যাবতীয় দুঃখদুর্দশা সহ চলতে থাকে। প্রথম শীতে দুটি ভারতীয় ডিভিশন ফ্ল্যাণ্ডারসে আমাদের দায়িত্বে আসে। পরীখা-যুদ্ধ তীব্রতম রূপ ধারণ করে। জনসাধারণের উদার সাহায্যের ফলে সৈয়দ আমীর আলীর ভারতীয় সৈন্যদের Regimental officer-দের পরামর্শ মোতাবেক যথাযোগ্য সাহায্যদানে সমর্থ হয়েছিলেন।

সৈয়দ আমীর আলীর সমাধির উপর যে সব পুষ্পস্তবক শোভা পাচ্ছিল, তারই মধ্যে একটি ছিল এই সোসাইটির দুই জন বৃটিশ সৈনিকের পক্ষ হতে যাঁরা তাঁদের দেশের সেবায় অনেক ক্লেশ বরণ করেছিলেন। সোসাইটির লাল পতাকা বাহিত এক কার্ডে এই কথাগুলি বিবৃত ছিল: By the efforts of this man, the hungry were fed, the naked were clothed, the sick healed and the wounded restored to health. The footsore refugee was helped on his way and many a mother clasps to her breast a living child that otherwise would have perished by the wayside. The despairing peasant, faced by the ruin of war, was again provided with implements to till the soil and seed corn was placed in his hands."

সৈয়দ আমার আলীর বাড়ী প্রীতি ভালোবাসার এক সুখনীড় ছিল। তিনি আদর্শ স্বামী, সন্তানবৎসল পিতা এবং বন্ধুবৎসল মনীষী ব্যক্তি ছিলেন এবং যে কেউ তাঁর অমল সংস্পর্শে এসেছেন তিনিই তাঁর মহত্ব ও চরিত্র মাধুর্যে মুগ্ধ হয়েছেন।

আর্নেস্ট এইচ. গ্রীফিন
(Earnest H. Griffin)

স্মৃতিকথা

পরিবার ঐতিহ্য

পয়গম্বর কন্যা ফাতিমা হতেই আমাদের বংশ উদ্ভূত বলে আমরা দাবী করি। আমাদের পূর্বপুরুষ অষ্টম ইমাম, আলী ওরফে আলী রাজা, উত্তর-পূর্ব পারস্যের খোরাসান প্রদেশের প্রধান শহর মেশেদ-এ সমাধিস্থ আছেন। তাঁর মাজার এখন ভক্তগণের তীর্থক্ষেত্রে পরিণত। মেশেদ শহরের গৌরব নিম্নলিখিত পার্সী বয়াত হতেই সম্যক উপলব্ধি করা যাবে। মধ্য এশিয়া সফরকারী আর্থার কনোলী এই বয়াতকে চিরস্মরণীয় করেছেন। বয়াতটি এই :

মাশ্‌হাদ্‌ আফজাল তার-ই-রুঈ জামিন আস্ত্‌
কে আন্‌জা নূর-ই-রাব্ব-উল্‌ আল-আমিন আস্ত্‌"

"Meshed is the most excellent place
on the face of the Earth,
For there doth shine the Light of
the Lord of the world"

—Arthur Connolly

অর্থাৎ : এই পৃথিবীর বুকে মেশেদ সব চেয়ে সুন্দর স্থান, কেননা এখানেই বিশ্বপ্রভুর আলো ঝলমল করে।

মহানবীর (দঃ) বংশধরগণ পশ্চিম দেশে (উত্তর আফ্রিকা এবং আরব দেশ) তাদের নামের সঙ্গে 'শরীফ' উপাধি ব্যবহার করে থাকেন। পারস্যে এবং ভারত বর্ষে তাঁরা 'আমীর' এবং 'সৈয়দ'---উভয়ের অর্থ একই---ব্যবহার করেন। মধ্যযুগে ইউরোপে কোন গণ্যমান্য ব্যক্তিকে সম্মান জানাতে যে 'সিনর' (Signor) কথা ব্যবহৃত হ'ত এই 'সৈয়দ' বা 'আমীর' কথার তাৎপর্য প্রায় তাই।

ইসমাইলী সম্প্রদায়ের প্রধানকে "শাইখ-আল-জাবাল" (পর্বতের বৃদ্ধ মানব) আখ্যায় ভূষিত করা হ'ত এবং তাঁর শিষ্যরা সাধারণতঃ তাঁকে "সৈয়েদেনা" অর্থাৎ 'আমাদের প্রভু' বলে সম্বোধন করতেন। এই শব্দ পরবর্তী দ্বাদশ শতকে খ্রীষ্টান জেহাদীদের (Crusaders) দ্বারা "সিড্‌নী" (Sidney) শব্দে অপভ্রান্ত হয়।

বর্তমান যুগে 'সৈয়দ' শব্দ মহানবীর বংশধরের প্রতি সম্মান জ্ঞাপনের উদ্দেশ্যে ব্যবহৃত হয়। 'সিদি' এবং 'সৈয়েদী' শব্দদ্বয় ঐ একই অর্থে ব্যবহৃত হয়।

আব্বাসীয় খলিফা আল-মামুনের আমন্ত্রণে আলী রাজা যখন মেশেদ আগমন করেন তখন তাঁর সঙ্গে মহানবীর (দঃ) অনেক বংশধর অসেন।

পরবর্তীকালে আমাদের পরিবারের অনেকেই সুফী বাদশাদের অধীনে উচচ রাজকার্যে নিযুক্ত হয়েছিলেন। আফগান আক্রমণের অব্যবহিত পূর্বে একজন রাজবাড়ীর প্রধান তত্ত্বাবধায়ক, এবং অন্য আর একজন কুম শহরে প্রধান ধর্মযাজক (Chief Mujtahid) ছিলেন। পারস্যের এই কুম শহর জ্ঞানী-গুণী পণ্ডিত এবং এর অধিবাসীদের ধর্মাসক্তির জন্য বিখ্যাত ছিল।

আমাদের পরিবার কিভাবে ভারতবর্ষে এসে বসবাস আরম্ভ করল তাও এক কৌতূহলোদ্দীপক কাহিনী। ১৭৩৯ খৃষ্টাব্দে নিষ্ঠুর নাদির শাহ নিজেকে পারস্যের একচ্ছত্র অধিপতিরূপে সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত করলেন। তিনি পশ্চিমে তুর্কীদের এবং উত্তরে রুশীয়দের সম্পূর্ণ পর্য্যুদস্ত করেছিলেন। এই সময়ে ভারতবর্ষে মোগল বাদশাহ মোহাম্মদ শাহ রাজত্ব করছিলেন। তাঁর অধীনস্থ সামন্ত রাজারা নামমাত্র তাঁর বশ্যতা স্বীকার করে স্বাধীনভাবে আপন আপন এলাকা শাসন করতেন। তাদের কলহবিবাদ ও আক্রমণাত্মক কার্যকলাপ নাদির শাহকে ভারতবর্ষ আক্রমণের এক অছিলা এনে দিল। এই উদ্দেশ্যে তিনি যে সৈন্যবাহিনী সংগঠন করলেন তার মধ্যে তাঁর নিজ প্রদেশ হতে বাছাই করা সৈন্যদল খোরাসানী বাহিনীর সেনাপত্য ভার পড়ল আমাদের পূর্ব-পুরুষ আহমদ আফজল খানের উপর।

নাদির শাহের আদেশে দিল্লীর হত্যালীলা ও শাহজাহানের হাতে গড়া প্রিয় রাজধানী লুণ্ঠনের কাহিনী অধিকাংশ ইতিহাস পাঠকেরই জানা। আমাদের পারিবারিক তথ্যাদি হতে এই সম্পর্কে যতটুকু জানা যায় তাতে এই লোমহর্ষক কাহিনীর কারণ প্রচলিত ধারণা হ'তে ভিন্নতর বোঝা যায়। সন্ধির শর্ত অনুসারে নাদির শাহ মোগল বাদশাহকে এই আশ্বাস দিয়েছিলেন যে তাঁর বিজয়ী সৈন্যগণ দিল্লীর অধিবাসীদের প্রতি কোন হিংসাত্মক কর্মে লিপ্ত হবে না। কিন্তু দিল্লীর অধিবাসীগণের একাংশ এই বিদেশী আক্রমণকারীদের বিরুদ্ধে প্রতিশোধাত্মক ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের উন্মাদনায় সংযম রক্ষা করতে পারেন নি। ফলে যত্রতত্র দিল্লীস্থ পারস্যবাসীদের উপর আক্রমণ শুরু হ'য়ে যায়। এই সংবাদ নাদির শাহের কানে আসে। তিনি যার পর নাই ক্রুদ্ধ হন। প্রতিহিংসায় অন্ধ হয়ে তিনি একান্ত অরাজসিকের মত দিল্লীবাসীদের যদৃচ্ছ হত্যার আদেশ দেন। রাজধানীর পথে রক্তস্রোত বয়ে যায়। দোষীর সঙ্গে নির্দোষ নির্মম অত্যাচারের শিকার হয়। সামান্যতম অপরাধকারী পর্যন্ত রেহাই পায় নাই। যে গৃহ হতে নাদির শাহের সৈন্যের প্রতি কণামাত্র বিরুদ্ধাচরণের আভাস পাওয়া গেছিল তাকে সম্পূর্ণরূপে ধ্বংস ও ধূলিসাৎ করা হয়েছিল। অবশেষে স্বয়ং মোগল বাদশাহ মোহাম্মদ শাহকে নাদির শাহের পায়ে লুটিয়ে পড়ে ক্ষমা ভিক্ষা করতে হয়েছিল। কয়েকজন পারস্যবাসী ওমরাহের সুপারিশে পরিশেষে নাদির শাহ দিল্লীবাসীদের প্রতি ক্ষমা প্রদর্শন করেন।

যখন নাদির শাহ বাবরের ময়ূর সিংহাসন ও দিল্লীর সঞ্চিত ধনরাশিসহ ভারত ছেড়ে চলে যাচ্ছিলেন, তখন মোগল বাদশাহ আহমদ আফজল খানকে তাঁর রাজকার্যে আত্মনিয়োগ করতে প্রবৃত্ত করেন। এই আহমদ আফজলই আমার পিতামহের পিতামহ। এই খোরাসানী সেদিন অনায়াসেই নাদির শাহের অনুমতি আদায় করে দিল্লীর দরবারে কর্ম গ্রহণ করেন এবং তার সাত হাজার অশ্বারোহী সৈন্যও মোহাম্মদ শাহের সেবায় উৎসর্গ করেন।

নাদির শাহের ভারত ত্যাগের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে যে ঝগড়া বিবাদ শুরু হয়ে যায় তাতে মারাঠাদের সুযোগ উপস্থিত হ'ল। তারা দিল্লী তথা দুর্বল মোগল বাদশার মনিব

সেজে বসল। আহমদ আফজল এবং তাঁর পুত্র মোহাম্মদ তাহির প্রাণ পণে দিল্লী রক্ষার চেষ্টা করে ব্যর্থ হলেন এবং মোহাম্মদ তাহির লাহোরে আশ্রয় নিতে বাধ্য হলেন। ইতিমধ্যে আহমদ আফজল মারা গেলেন। লাহোরে থাকতে অযোধ্যার সুদক্ষ নবাব শুজাউদ্দৌলার কাছ থেকে মোহাম্মদ তাহির এক আমন্ত্রণ পেলেন। তাঁর পিতা সফদর জঙ্গের মৃত্যুর পর শুজাউদ্দৌলা অযোধ্যার শাসনভার হাতে পান।

মহানবীর (দঃ) বংশধরগণ ভারতে আগমনের প্রথম থেকেই নগর-উপনগরে বসবাস শুরু করেন এবং এই সব নগর এলাকায় ইতিমধ্যেই তাঁদের আত্মীয়গণ বসতি স্থাপন করেছিলেন। মুজাফফর নগরের হিলোর, বারাহ এবং অযোধ্যার মোহন ও বিলগ্রামই এঁদের প্রিয় বসতি কেন্দ্র ছিল। আমাদের পূর্ব পুরুষ যখন মোহনে বসতি স্থাপন করেন তখন মোহন একটি সমৃদ্ধ নগর ছিল এবং এই সময় স্যার চার্লস্ ইরিয়ট উনাও জেলার ইতিহাস লিপিবদ্ধ করেন। বর্তমানে ইহা লুপ্তগৌরব।

শুজাউদ্দৌলা বাদশাহ মোহাম্মদ শাহের এক পালিতা কন্যাকে বিবাহ করেন। তিনি রাজধানী দিল্লী এবং নিজ সুবাহ্ অযোধ্যায় সমান প্রিয় ছিলেন। তিনি মারাঠাদের বিরুদ্ধে আফগানরাজ আহম্মদ শাহ আবদালীর সমর্থনে ১৭৬১ খৃষ্টাব্দে একদল সৈন্য প্রেরণ করেন। তাঁর সৈন্যদলের কতকাংশ আমাদের পূর্বপুরুষ মোহাম্মদ তাহির পরিচালনা করেন। তাহির পরিচালিত সৈন্যদলকে কতকগুলি ভয়ঙ্কর আক্রমণের মোকাবিলা করতে হয়, কেননা আত্মরক্ষার জন্য মারাঠারা প্রাণপণ যুদ্ধে কসুর করেনি। পানিপথের রণক্ষেত্রে ভারতের ভাগ্য তিন তিনবার পরীক্ষিত হয়েছে।

১১৯৭ খৃষ্টাব্দে শাহাবুদ্দিন মোহাম্মদ ঘোরী যে বিজয় লাভ করেন তাই ভারতের উপর দীর্ঘ দিনের ঝুলায়মান পর্দা সরিয়ে দেয়। চার শতাব্দী পরে তিমুরীদ বা পাঠান-মোগল সাম্রাজ্যের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা বাবর পাঠানদের উৎখাত করেন এবং দিল্লীর সিংহাসনে বসেন। ১৭৬১ খৃষ্টাব্দে আফগানদের সহযোগীতায় আবদালী বাদশার নেতৃত্বে এক মুসলিম রাষ্ট্রজোট মারাঠা শক্তিকে পর্য্যুদস্ত করেন এবং ফলে ভারতবর্ষে বৃটিশ সাম্রাজ্য প্রতিষ্ঠার পথ পরিষ্কার করেন।

আহমদ শাহ আবদালীর বিজয় মারাঠা শক্তিকে চূর্ণবিচূর্ণ করে এবং তাদের ভবিষ্যৎ উত্থানের পথ চিরতরে রুদ্ধ হয়ে যায়। দাক্ষিণাত্য হতে যে মারাঠা শক্তি উত্থিত হয়ে সমগ্র ভারত বিজয়ের স্বপ্ন দেখছিল তা কিভাবে পরাজিত ও বিধ্বস্ত হয় তার চমৎকার বর্ণনা আছে কাশীরাম পণ্ডিতের লেখায়। কাশীরাম নিজে এক মারাঠী ব্রাহ্মণ ছিলেন, কিন্তু তিনি অযোধ্যার নবাব শুজাউদ্দৌলার অধীনে চাকুরী রত ছিলেন এবং স্বয়ং যুদ্ধেও উপস্থিত ছিলেন। এ যুদ্ধকে তিনি পানিপথের 'শেষ যুদ্ধ' বলে আখ্যায়িত করেন। লেফ্টন্যাণ্ট কর্ণেল জেম্স্ ব্রাউন ত্রিশ বৎসর পরে এই পুস্তকের অনুবাদ প্রকাশ করেন। সম্প্রতি এই পুস্তক ইণ্ডিয়ান ইডুকেশন সার্ভিসের মিঃ রওলিনসনের দ্বারা (Rawlinson) পুনর্সম্পাদিত হয়েছে।

কাশীরামের বিবরণ থেকে জানা যায় আহমদ শাহ আবদালীর দুর্দ্ধর্ষ আফ্‌গানী সৈন্যদের চেয়ে ভারতীয় সৈন্যেরা অনেক বেশী মানবিক আচরণে সমৃদ্ধ ছিল। শুজা-উদ্দৌলা এবং ভারতীয় মুসলিম রাষ্ট্র জোটের প্রধানেরা হাজার হাজার বিজিত মারাঠাদের 'দুরানী' সৈন্যদের খড়গ্‌ হতে রক্ষা করেন। মারাঠারা কিভাবে ভারতীয় মুসলিমদের এই মহানুভবতার প্রতিদান দিয়েছিলেন তার বিবরণ পাওয়া যাবে বৃটিশ ভারতীয় সৈন্য-বাহিনীর দুইজন অফিসার সম্পাদিত *Soldiering in India in 1965* নামক গ্রন্থে। এই গ্রন্থ এখন ম্যাক্‌ফারসনসের (Macphersons) দ্বারা পুনর্সম্পাদিত হয়েছে।

বিখ্যাত মনীষী ও চিকিৎসক প্রভৃতির জন্মস্থান বলে মোহন কৃতিত্বের দাবীদার। এই মোহন নগরের হাকিম সিরাজ-উদ্দীন আলী খান পরবর্তী দুই অযোধ্যা-রাজের চিকিৎসক ছিলেন। তিনি তাঁর নিজ বাসস্থান মোহনে এক বিরাট ইমামবাড়া নির্মাণ করেন এবং তার পরিচালনার জন্য এক ট্রাষ্ট গঠন করেন। বিদ্বান মনীষীদের মধ্যে 'রাহবার-ই-ইস্‌লাম' গ্রন্থ প্রণেতার নাম সবিশেষ উল্লেখযোগ্য। এই স্মরণীয় গ্রন্থ প্রশংসনীয় যোগ্যতায় এই সত্য প্রচার করেছে যে আল্লার কাছে প্রার্থনা যে কোনো ভাষার মাধ্যমেই নিবেদিত হোক না কেন তা আরবী ভাষার মতই সর্বশক্তিমানের দরবারে সমান গ্রহণীয় ও আদরনীয়। বিভিন্ন ভাষাভাষীরা তাদের আপন আপন মাতৃভাষায় কোরান শরীফ পাঠ করলে তা আরবী ভাষায় পাঠের সমানই প্রশংসা ও প্রণিধানযোগ্য এই তথ্যও তিনি প্রকাশ করেছেন। তিনি প্রমাণ দিয়েছেন মহানবী (দঃ) আরবী জ্ঞানহীন পারস্য-বাসীকে তাদের আপন মাতৃভাষায় প্রার্থনা করতে অনুমতি দিয়েছিলেন। মোহাম্মদ হোসাইন এই সব তত্ত্ব জনপ্রিয় করার কাজে আত্মনিয়োগ করেছিলেন।

এই মোহাম্মদ তাহিরের পুত্র মনসুর আলী খান ওরুফে মনোয়ার আলী খান ছিলেন আমার পিতামহ। এঁর সময় হতেই আমাদের বংশধরদের অধিকাংশই দ্বিতীয় নাম ("আলী") ধারণ করে আসছেন। মনসুর আলী খান নবাব আসফউদ্দৌলার অধীনে রিভিনিউ কলেক্টর হিসেবে কাজ করতেন। এক মহান ব্যক্তিত্ব সম্পন্ন লোক ছিলেন তিনি। তাঁর আচরণ ছিল সরল ও তির্যক। উপরের দিকে ঘোরানো গুম্ফে তাঁকে ভয়ঙ্কর দেখাত। কবি সওদার 'কাসিদা-ই-শাহরার-আশার' কাব্য গ্রন্থে তাঁর নামের উল্লেখ আছে। এই কাব্যগ্রন্থে কবি দিল্লীকে 'শাহজাহানাবাদের' স্থলে সংক্ষেপে 'জাহানাবাদ' বলে উল্লেখ করেছেন এবং এই ভাগ্যবিড়ম্বিত শহরের উপর দিয়ে যে লোমহর্ষক হত্যালীলা অনুষ্ঠিত হ'য়ে গেছে তার বর্ণনা দিয়েছেন।

কোন এক বিদ্রোহী রাজার সঙ্গে যুদ্ধে ১৮২০ খৃষ্টাব্দে মনসুর আলী খান নিহত হন। হাকিম সিরাজ উদ্দীন আলী খান---যিনি মনসুর আলীর ভগিনীকে বিবাহ করেছিলেন---আমার পিতার পড়াশুনার ভার নেন এবং তাঁকে একজন চিকিৎসক রূপে গড়ে তোলেন। আমার পিতা ভ্রমণপিপাসু ছিলেন এবং চিকিৎসা-পেশার প্রতি বিরক্ত ছিলেন। তাঁর মা আমিনা বেগমের মৃত্যুর পরে তিনি উত্তরাধিকার সূত্রে প্রাপ্ত আপন

সম্পত্তির অংশ তাঁর তিন ভাইয়ের মধ্যে বিক্রয় করে দেন এবং বিক্রয়লব্ধ অর্থ দিয়ে তিনি ভ্রমণে বেরিয়ে পড়েন। তিনি সমগ্র দেশ পূর্ব হ'তে পশ্চিমে বহুবার ঘুরেছেন। এই পরিভ্রমণ কালে তিনি তাঁর জ্ঞাতিভ্রাতা জাফর আলী খানের বাসায় প্রায়ই উঠ্‌তেন। জাফর আলী থাকতেন উড়িষ্যার কটকে। ইষ্ট ইণ্ডিয়া কোম্পানীর অধীনে তিনি ডিপুটি কলেক্টর ও সেটেল্‌মেণ্ট অফিসার ছিলেন। এই রকম এক ভ্রমণকালে তিনি সম্বলপুরের শামসুদ্দিন খানের কন্যাকে বিবাহ করেন। আমার মার আমরা পাঁচ সন্তান ছিলাম। বিবাহের পর আমার পিতা তাঁর জ্ঞাতি ভ্রাতা জাফর আলী খানের কাছাকাছি থাকবার জন্য কটকেই বসবাস শুরু করেন।

কটকে থাকবার সময় আমার পিতা উড়িষ্যার জজ মিঃ ম্যালেট (Mr. Malet C.S.) এবং বাংলা দেশের এডুকেশন ডিরেক্টর মিঃ সোয়াটের সঙ্গে পরিচিত হন। তাঁরা উভয়েই আমার পিতাকে তাঁর সন্তানদের ইংরাজী শিক্ষাদানের পরামর্শ দেন। সেই সময় যদিও ইংরেজি শিক্ষা মুসলমানদের মধ্যে জনপ্রিয় ছিল না, তথাপি আমার পিতা বুঝেছিলেন যে এই ইংরেজী শিক্ষাই অদূর ভবিষ্যতে দেশের জন-চিত্ত ও চরিত্র সংগঠনে বিশেষ সহায়ক হবে। সুতরাং তিনি মিঃ সোয়াটের পরামর্শ গ্রহণে দ্বিধা করলেন না। তাঁর তিন পুত্রকে তিনি কলকাতা মাদ্রাসায় (Calcutta Madrasa) ভর্তি করে দিলেন। এই সময় কলকাতা মাদ্রাসা গৌরবের উচ্চ শিখরে ছিল। আমার তৃতীয় ভ্রাতা তখন মাত্র সাত বৎসরের বালক এবং আমি সর্বকনিষ্ঠ ও শিশুমাত্র। আমার পিতা শীঘ্রই কলকাতার উপর বীতশ্রদ্ধ হয়ে উঠ্‌লেন; আর কলকাতার অবস্থা এই সময় এমন কিছু ভাল ছিল না। ১৮০৬ খৃষ্টাব্দে স্যার জন শোরের(Sir John Shore) সময় বোখারিয়ো রাজদূত (Bokhariot envoy) নিষ্ঠুর সমালোচনায় কলকাতার ব্যঙ্গচিত্র অঙ্কন করেছেন। আমার পিতা যে সময় কলকাতার প্রতি বিরক্ত হয়ে উঠেছিলেন, কলকাতা তখন এই বোখারিয়ো রাজদূতের সমালোচনার অবস্থা কাটিয়ে উঠ্‌তে পারেনি।

আমার পিতার পুরানো বন্ধু সৈয়দ কেরামত আলী কয়েক বৎপর পূর্বেই হুগলী মহসীন ট্রাষ্টের মুতওয়াল্লী নিযুক্ত হয়েছিলেন। পিতা তাঁর বন্ধু কেরামত আলীর সান্নিধ্যের আশায় হুগ্‌লীতে চলে এলেন এবং তাঁর দুই জ্যেষ্ঠ পুত্রকে কলকাতা মাদ্রাসা হতে হুগ্‌লী মহসিনীয়া কলেজে ভর্তি করে দিলেন।

বাল্যস্মৃতি

আমার প্রথমতম বাল্যস্মৃতির মধ্যে একটি পরিকল্পনাহীন প্রকাণ্ড প্রাচ্য রীতির বাড়ীর কথা মনে পড়ে। তিন, চার একর এলাকা জুড়ে এই বাড়ী। এই বাড়ীর দক্ষিণে উঁচু দেয়াল ঘেরা একটি বাগান ছিল। আম গাছ, জাম গাছ, কলা গাছ, পিয়ারা গাছ, বাটাভিয়ান কাগ্‌জী লেবু প্রভৃতি নানা ফলবৃক্ষে এই বাগান পরিপূর্ণ ছিল। আরো অনেক ফলের গাছ ছিল যার নাম এখন মনে নেই। বাগানের এক চতুর্থাংশ

নানা রকম ফুলের গাছে পরিপূর্ণ ছিল। গোলাপ, জেস্মীন, সুগন্ধ বেলী ও আরো অন্যান্য ফুল গাছ। আমি বয়ঃপ্রাপ্তির সঙ্গে সঙ্গে এই বাগানের প্রতি বিশেষভাবে আকৃষ্ট হয়েছিলাম। দেশীয় ফল ও শাকশব্জীর গাছগাছড়া ছাড়াও আমি বিলেতী শব্জীর চাষ শুরু করেছিলাম। এই সব বিলেতী শব্জীর বীজ আমি ইংলণ্ড হ'তে আনবার ব্যবস্থা করেছিলাম। *Chambers' Information for the People* নামক গ্রন্থ যত্নসহকারে পাঠ করে আমি এই সব বিলেতী শব্জী উৎপাদনের পদ্ধতি জেনে নিয়েছিলাম।

আমি প্রচুর পরিমাণে কুমড়া উৎপাদন করতাম। আমার মালীর সাহায্যে আমি এইসব কুমড়া বিক্রি করে যে পয়সা পেতাম তা দিয়ে পুস্তকাদি ও গুলি-বারুদ কিনতাম। আমি অল্প বয়সেই বন্দুক ছোড়া শিখে ফেলেছিলাম। আমার বড় ভাইয়েরা আগুণ নিয়ে খেলার ব্যাপারে আমাকে কখনো উৎসাহ দিতেন না, কারণ তারা মনে করতেন একটা বালকের পক্ষে এটা একটা মারাত্মক খেলা। সুতরাং আমি আমার বীরাঙ্গনা মাতার সাহায্যে গোপনে বন্দুক-ছোড়া শিখে ফেলেছিলাম। আমার মা 'ভূত-প্রেত' ছাড়া অন্য কিছুকে ভয় করতেন না।

আমাদের পশ্চিমী এক ঝগড়েটে ব্রাহ্মণ দারোয়ানের কাছে আমি মল্লযুদ্ধ ও লাঠি খেলা শিখেছিলাম। পরে সে আমাকে তলোয়ার খেলায়ও দীক্ষা দিয়েছিল। কিন্তু তার মত দক্ষতার সঙ্গে আমি কখনো ঐ অস্ত্র চালনা করতে পারিনি। আমি ১৪ বছর বয়সে রোজ সকাল হতে ভারতের বিশিষ্ট ব্যায়াম মুগুর ভাজাও শুরু করেছিলাম। প্রথমে ১০ সের ওজনের মুগুর নিয়ে আরম্ভ করে শেষ পর্যন্ত আধা মণ ওজনের মুগুর পরিচালনা করতে আমি অভ্যস্থ হয়েছিলাম।

আমরা ঠিক ধনবান না হলেও স্বচ্ছল অবস্থার লোক ছিলাম। আমাদের আস্তাবলে মাত্র দুটি ঘোড়া ছিল---একটিতে আমার বড় ভাইয়েরা চড়তেন, অপরটিতে আমি আমার ঘোড়ায় চড়ার প্রথম পাঠ নিয়েছিলাম। এই ঘোড়া দিয়ে গাড়ী টানা হতো না, তবে যখন আমার মা আমার দ্বিতীয় ভাইয়ের স্ত্রীকে নিয়ে নদী তীরে বেড়াতে যেতেন কেবল তখনই ঘোড়া দুটিকে গাড়ীতে জুড়ে দেয়া হত। আমাদের বাড়ী হতে নদী তীর ছিল দুই মাইল দূরে এবং মা খুব কম সময়ই নদীতীরে বেড়াতে যেতেন।

আমাদের বাড়ীতে এক 'মৌলবী' রেখে ছিলাম। তিনি আমাদের ছোট বেলায় পারসী ও আরবী পড়াতেন। আমার মা যথানির্দিষ্ট নামাজের প্রতি সদা সতর্ক ছিলেন এবং বাড়ীর মেয়েরা নামাজের প্রতি অবহেলা প্রদর্শন করতে পারত না। ওদিকে মৌলবী সাহেব বাড়ীর চাকরবাকরদের নামাজের তদারকী ও খবরদারী করতেন। আমরা বালকেরা দিনের বেলায় স্কুলে থাকতাম বলে শুধু সন্ধ্যার নামাজে শরীক হতাম।

আমি ও আমার কনিষ্ঠ ভ্রাতা ছাড়াও পাড়ার অন্যান্য ছেলেরাও মৌলবী সাহেবের ক্লাসে যোগদান করত। প্রায়ই দেখা যেত চিনসুরায় অবস্থানরত মুসলিম সুবাদার ও শরীফ সিপাহীরা মৌলবী সাহেবের 'গুলিস্তান'-এর ক্লাসে আমাদের সঙ্গে যোগ দিতেন। 'গুলিস্তান' বা 'গোলাপ-বাগ্' পারসি কবি সাদীর অমর গ্রন্থ। যদিও আমি খুব তরুণ

ছিলাম তথাপি খুব আগ্রহের সঙ্গে এই সিপাহীদের কথোপকথন অনুধাবন করতাম। এই সিপাহীরা এদের সঙ্গে মৌলবী সাহেবের গুলিস্তানের ক্লাসে একাধিক বার এক আগন্তুককে এনেছিলেন। তাকে দেখেই আমি বুঝেছিলাম তিনি এদেশের লোক নন। তিনি অবশ্য অবাধে হিন্দুস্থানী বলে যেতেন, কিন্তু তার উচ্চারণে বিদেশী প্রভাব ঢাকা পড়ত না। এবং যদিও তিনি হিন্দুস্থানী পোষাক পরে আস্‌তেন, তবু তার গায়ের রং ও কথার ঢং দেখে আমার তীব্র সংশয় উপস্থিত হল এবং আমার এই সংশয়ের কথা আমি আমাদের ভোঁতা-বুদ্ধির মৌলবী সাহহেবকে বল্‌লাম। আমাদের এই আগন্তুক ভদ্রলোক যখনই কোনো আলাপ শুরু করতেন তখনই তা ঘুরে ফিরে একই বক্তব্যকে প্রদক্ষিণ করত এবং তা ছিল রুশ সম্রাটের মহত্ব ও শক্তি এবং রুশ সৈন্যদের বীরত্ব এবং তাদের ভারতাগমন প্রসংগে। এই ঘটনা, যদি আমার স্মৃতিবিভ্রম না ঘটে, ঘটেছিল ঠিক ক্রীমিয়ার যুদ্ধের সময়। ভারতীয় সিপাহীরা এঁকে খুব সমীহই করতেন মনে হত।

সিপাহী বিদ্রোহের পরে আমার বড় ভাই ডিপুটি ম্যাজিষ্ট্রেট ও ডিপুটি কালেক্টর হয়ে বিহারে চলে যান। সেকালে এই চাকরীকে একটা মর্যাদা ও গুরুত্ব দেয়া হত। সিপাহী বিদ্রোহের প্রতিক্রিয়া তখন চলছে এবং বিহারে তখন শান্তি ফেরেনি। কোয়ের সিংএর (Koer Singh) অভিযান কাহিনী জনসাধারণের স্মৃতিতে তখনও সজীব। শাহাবাদ জেলায় শান্তি ও শৃঙখলা ফিরিয়ে আনার দায়িত্ব পড়েছিল আমার ভাইয়ের উপর। তিনি বিচার বুদ্ধি ও সমঝোতার মনোভাব নিয়ে দক্ষতার সঙ্গেই তার দায়িত্ব পালন করেছিলেন বলেই মনে হয়।

কোয়ের সিং এর কথা আমার কিছু কিছু মনে পড়ে। এই রাজপুত জমিদার মিঃ উইলিয়াম টেলরের অবিমৃষ্যকারিতার জন্যেই বিদ্রোহে যোগ দিয়েছিলেন মনে হয়। মিঃ টেলর বিদ্রোহের সময় পাটনার কমিশনার ছিলেন। কোয়ের সিংকে আমন্ত্রিত অতিথি হিসেবে ডেকে এনে বন্দী করার ফন্দী করেছিলেন মিঃ টেলর। এই তথ্য জানতে পেরে কোয়ের সিং মুন্‌সী (পরবর্তীকালে নবাব) আমীর আলী ও সৈয়দ বেলায়েত আলী খানের কাছে তাঁর নিরাপত্তার আশ্বাস চাইলেন। মুনশী আমীর আলী ছিলেন সহকারী কমিশনার এবং বেলায়েত আলী সাহেব মিঃ টেলরকে শান্তিরক্ষার কাজে সহায়তা করছিলেন। এঁরা কিন্তু কোয়ের সিংকে কোন নিরাপত্তার আশ্বাস দিতে পারলেন না। তখন কোয়ের সিং তার বিরাট দলবল নিয়ে আরাহ্‌ (Arrah) পরিত্যাগ করে গেলেন এবং সমগ্র দক্ষিণ বিহার পুড়িয়ে ছারখার করে দিতে লাগলেন। এই পরিস্থিতির মোকাবিলার জন্যই আমার ভাইকে ডাকা হয়। কোয়ের সিংএর বহু প্রজা কোম্পানী সরকারের সেনাবাহিনীতে যোগদান করতে পর্যন্ত অস্বীকার করে। কোয়ের সিংএর তাণ্ডবলীলার পরে পরেই দীনাপুর সেনাবিভাগের তিন ব্যাটেলিয়ন বাহিনীও এই বিদ্রোহে যোগ দেয়। ১৮৫৯ পর্যন্ত কোয়ের সিং কোম্পানীর বিরুদ্ধে যুদ্ধ করে গিয়েছিলেন। কব্জিতে বন্দুকের একটা গুলীর আঘাতে

কোয়ের সিং ১৮৫৯ খৃষ্টাব্দে আহত হন। এই আহত হস্ত বীর কোয়ের সিং নিজ তরবারী দিয়ে কেটে ফেলেন, কিন্তু এই আঘাতের ফলেই ৭৬ বৎসর বয়সে তার মৃত্যু হয়। তাঁর শিষ্যগণ নিরাপত্তা সন্ধির ভিত্তিতে আত্ম-সমর্পণ করেন।

কর্ণেল হেদায়েত আলীর সঙ্গে আমাদের পরিবারের জ্ঞাতি-সম্পর্ক ছিল। তিনি বিহার সামরিক পুলিস বাহিনীর এক বিশ্বস্ত সৈনিক ছিলেন। তিনি আবার জিলা ম্যাজিস্ট্রেটের বাড়ীর রক্ষী বাহিনীর সঙ্গে যুক্ত ছিলেন। তাঁর বিদ্রোহী সেনাদলের সমস্ত ভ্রূকুটি উপেক্ষা করে তিনি কোয়ের সিংএর আক্রমণ প্রতিহত করেছিলেন। কয়েক জন বৃটিশ অফিসার জখম হলেও তিনি একজন সিনিয়র ভারতীয় অফিসার হিসেবে তাঁর বাহিনীকে কোয়ের সিং এর বিরুদ্ধে বিজয়ী করতে সমর্থ হয়েছিলেন। পরে তাঁকে লেফ্টন্যাণ্ট কর্ণেলের পদমর্যাদা দেয়া হয়। বিদ্রোহের পর তাঁর এই বাহিনীকে নিয়মিত বাহিনীতে পরিণত করা হয় এবং "Rattry's Sikhs" নামে অভিহিত করা হয়। এই বাহিনী পরে আরো অনেক অভিযানে আরো অনেক খ্যাতির অধিকারী হয়।

আমার বড় ভাই চাকুরীতে সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত হবার পর আমার পরবর্তী দুই ভাই তাঁর সঙ্গে মিলিত হলেন। আমি রইলাম একা আমার আম্মার তত্ত্বাবধানে পড়াশুনো নিয়ে। আমি অত্যন্ত পড়ুয়া ছিলাম। বারো বৎসর বয়সের মধ্যেই আমি গীবনের 'রোম সাম্রাজ্যের উত্থান ও পতনে'র কাহিনী প্রায় শেষ করে ফেলেছিলাম। এই কাহিনীর অনেকাংশ যদিও আমার বয়ঃকনিষ্ঠতার জন্য আমার কাছে দুর্বোধ্য ছিল, তবু রোম সাম্রাজ্যের চিত্র, তার ক্রমোন্নতি এবং তার বিজয়ীবাহিনীর অগ্রগতি আমাকে মন্ত্রমুগ্ধের মত আকর্ষণ করত। কিন্তু আমি সব চেয়ে আকর্ষিত হয়েছিলাম ষষ্ঠ অধ্যায়ে, যেখানে লেখক আরবীয় মুসলিম শক্তির উত্থান কাহিনী বিবৃত করেছেন।

আরবী ও পারসী সাহিত্যের প্রথম শ্রেণীর পণ্ডিত হিসেবে আমার পিতার সুখ্যাতি ছিল। চিকিৎসা বিদ্যায় তাঁর পারদর্শিতা তিনি অযোধ্যার নবাব শুজাউদ্দৌলার রাজ-সভা-হাকিম তাঁর চাচা হাকিম সিরাজউদ্দীন আলী খানের কাছে অর্জন করেছিলেন। এছাড়াও তিনি আরবের ইতিহাস ও দর্শন সম্পর্কেও যথেষ্ট পাণ্ডিত্য অর্জন করেছিলেন। মৃত্যুর কয়েক বৎসর পূর্বে তিনি মহানবী মোহাম্মদের (দঃ) উপর এক ধারাবাহিক ইতি-হাস লেখা শুরু করেন। আমার ধারণা তিনি এই অমূল্য রচনা প্রায়ই সম্পূর্ণ করে এনেছিলেন যখন মৃত্যু তাঁকে হঠাৎ টেনে নেয়। ১৮৫৬ সালে তিনি কলেরায় আক্রান্ত হয়ে মারা যান। তাঁর সুন্দর হস্তাক্ষরের এই পাণ্ডুলিপি পারিবারিক আরো অনেক নথিপত্রের সঙ্গে সিন্দুকে ভরে রাখা হয়। এক বৎসরের অধিককাল যাবৎ এই সিন্দুক আমার আম্মা আর খুলে দেখেন নি। কিন্তু যখন এই দীর্ঘকাল পরে প্রথম এই সিন্দুক খুলে দেখা গেল তখন হায়, এই অমূল্য রচনাবলীর সমগ্র পৃষ্ঠা জুড়ে উই পোকার সারি কিল বিল করছে! এই অবস্থা দেখে আমার আম্মা দুঃখ ও হতাশায় ভেঙে পড়লেন। হায়, আমাদের পরিবারের অনেক নথিপত্র আর কোনোদিন পুনরুদ্ধার করা যাবে না।

চৌদ্দ বৎসর বয়সেই আমি বেশ কয়েকটি বন্দুক যোগাড় করে ফেলেছিলাম। এর একটিকে আমি এক গ্রাম্য কর্মকারের সহায়তায় হাঁস শিকারের উপযোগী বন্দুকে পরিণত করেছিলাম। আমি নিজেই আমার ভারী বুলেট তৈরী করার ব্যবস্থা করেছিলাম। কলকাতা হতে সীসা এনে গলিয়ে এই বুলেট তৈরী করা হত। বাজারে যখন গুলি পাওয়া যেত না, তখন আমি এই থেকে গুলি বানিয়ে নিতাম।---- আমাদের পুরান বাগানটি বিষধর সর্পে পরিপূর্ণ ছিল। আমি এই সর্পগুলি বন্দুক দিয়ে মেরে ফেলতাম। এখানে একটি ঘটনা উল্লেখযোগ্য। আমার পায়রা পোষার নেশা ছিল। একদিন লক্ষ্য করা গেল, পায়রার বাচ্চা গুলি প্রায়ই উধাও হয়ে যায়। আমাদের বাগান প্রহরী বালকটিকে কারণ অনুসন্ধান করতে বলা হলে সে মই দিয়ে পায়্রার খাঁচায় উঠ্‌ল। উঠেই সে চমকে 'সাপ! 'সাপ! করে চীৎকার করতে করতে সটান নেমে এলো। তার চীৎকারে বাড়ীর উপস্থিত সকলেই সেখানে হাজির হ'ল। আমার আম্মাও ছুটে এসেছিলেন। আমি সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই বন্দুক নিয়ে ঐ মই বেয়ে খাঁচায় গেলাম। আমার আম্মা ভয় পেয়ে আমাকে তীব্রভাবে বাধা দিলেন। আমি জবাব দিলাম, আমার কাজে অন্য-বালকের জীবন বিপন্ন করা যেতে পারে না, আর তা ছাড়া, আমার পোষা পায়রা সংরক্ষণের দায়িত্ব আমারই। এই বলে আমি ফণা-উদ্যত প্রকাণ্ড কালো গোখুরো সাপটিকে গুলি করে মেরে ফেলুলাম। সাপটি যেভাবে ছোবল মারবার জন্য উদ্যত হয়ে ছিল তাতে আর একটু বিলম্ব করলেই অবশ্যাম্ভাবী মৃত্যুর হাত থেকে রক্ষা পাওয়া যেত না। এই ঘটনার কথা মনে পড়লে আজো আমার শঙ্কা-শিহরণ জাগে।

আমি শিকারের নেশায় আমার বন্দুক সব সময় গুলি-ভর্তি করে রাখতাম। একবার এই বন্দুক দিয়ে আমি এক সবুজ সাপ মেরেছিলাম। লোকে বলে, এই সবুজ সাপ এমনই ভয়ঙ্কর যে, এর আক্রমণের স্থল---চক্ষু। মানুষ বা অন্য জীব যাকেই সে আক্রমণ করবে চোখে ছোবল দেবে। এই সবুজ সাপ মারার কাহিনীও চমকপ্রদ। একদিন আমি বাগানে পায়চারি করছি ও বই পড়ছি। এমন সময় দেখলাম একটি কাঠবেড়ালী স্থির নিশ্চল হয়ে আম গাছের এক শাখায় বসে আছে। একটি ছোট্ট পাথর ছুড়ে দিলাম। কাঠবেড়ালীটি দ্রুত পালিয়ে গেল। সঙ্গে সঙ্গে দেখতে পেলাম একটি সবুজ সাপও দ্রুত সরে যাচ্ছে। বুঝ্‌তে পারলাম কাঠ বড়ালীর নিশ্চলতার হেতু। আমি কাল বিলম্ব না করে বন্দুক এনে এটিকে মেরে ফেললাম।

সেকালে কোনো ভারতীয় বাড়ীতেই ফিল্টারের প্রচলন ছিল না। আমরা পানী গরম ক'রে পান করতাম। এক ধরণের মৃৎপাত্রে সরিষার তৈল দিয়ে সলতে সহযোগে বাতি জ্বালানোর ব্যবস্থা হ'ত। একে 'চেরাগ, বলা হত। বর্তমান যুগের 'ম্যাচেস্' তখন অজ্ঞাত ছিল। বাড়ীতে আগুন জ্বালাবার কাজে ব্যবহারের জন্য ফেরিওয়ালারা "দিয়াশলাই" বলে সালফার যুক্ত এক রকমের কাঠি ফেরি করে বেড়াত। আমরা তাই ব্যবহার করতাম।

শীতকালে আমি আমার বন্ধুদের নিয়ে হুগলী নদীর অদূর পাশের ঝিলে বুনো হাঁস শিকারে যেতাম। আমার পায়রার খাচায় সাপ দেখা সেই বালকটিই আমাদের বুনো হাঁস শিকারের সঙ্গী হ'ত। একবার এক বিপদ হ'য়ে গেল। ঝিলের মাঝ পানীতে শিকার করা হাঁস আনতে গিয়ে 'দল' ঘাসে আটকে বালকটি ডুবে গেল। এই বিপর্যয়ে আমাদের দুঃখের অবধি রইল না। এর পর বহুদিন আমরা এখানে আর শিকারে যাইনি। স্থানীয় অধিবাসীরা বলত ঐ ঝিলে এক 'জিন' বাস করে এবং ঐ জিন-ই সেই বালকটিকে ডুবিয়ে দিয়েছিল। আমাদের ধারণা বালকটিকে কুমীরে ডুবিয়ে দিয়েছিল।

এই ঘটনার পর আমরা স্থানীয় মাঝি ও জেলেদেরই কেবল ঝিল থেকে পাখী কুড়িয়ে আনার কাজে নিয়োগ করতাম। পাশের গ্রামের একটি লোককে আমি মাসে তিন টাকা করে দিতাম। তার কাজ ছিল, ঝিলে যখন পাখীরা আসে সেই খবরটি যথা সময়ে আমাকে পৌঁছে দেওয়া। আমরা রাত দুটোর সময় বাড়ী হ'তে বের হতাম। নৌকা ভাড়া করে ঝিলে পৌঁছতে ভোর চারটে বাজত। সুন্দর জ্যোৎস্না-স্নাত রাত। বিভিন্ন পাখীতে ঝিল পরিপূর্ণ থাকত। মাছে ভর্তি ঝিলে এই পাখীরা কাকলি কূজন মুখরিত হয়ে আহার করত। আমরা সাধারণতঃ তিরিশ্ থেকে পঞ্চাশটি পর্যন্ত পাখী শিকার করতে পারতাম। সেকেলে বন্দুক দিয়ে এতগুলি শিকার ধরা কম কথা নয়।

আমাদের এই সাধারণ পাখী শিকার কাহিনী আজকের দিনের খেলোয়াড়ী শিকারী-দের হয়তো হাসির উদ্রেক করবে। কিন্তু এই পাখী শিকার আমাকে ও আমার বন্ধুদের প্রচুর আনন্দ দিত এবং সেই আমাদের পুরস্কার। ফেরার পথে আমরা দেখতে পেতাম ছোট বড় অনেক কুমীর ঝিলের ধারে রোদ পোহাচ্ছে। আমাদের দেখে ওরা পানিতে নেমে পড়ত। বড় কুমীর গুলি তেমন ভয় পেত মনে হয়না, ওরা ধীরে ধীরে পানীতে ডুব দিত। এই অবস্থায় আমরা ওদের প্রতি গুলি ছুড়বার প্রচুর সুযোগ পেতাম। এবং আমরা মাঝে মাঝে এই সুযোগের সদ্ব্যবহারও করতাম। মাঝে মাঝে দু একটা কুমীর যে মারা পড়ত না তাও নয়।

এই পাখী শিকারই ছিল আমার প্রাথমিক বাল্য জীবনের প্রধান আনন্দ বিনোদনের অবলম্বন। কিছু বড় হলে আমার ছুটিগুলো কাটত বড় ভাইদের সঙ্গে শাহাবাদে। আমার ভাইদের সঙ্গে সেখানেও আমি বনে শিকারে যেতাম। শিকারের সময় যখন আমরা ঐ অঞ্চলের জমিদারদের নিকট হতে হাতি সংগ্রহ করতে অসমর্থ হতাম তখন আমরা মাচান তৈরি করে শিকারের প্রস্তুতি নিতাম। এই সকল মাচানে সাধারণতঃ শিকারীরা অপেক্ষায় থাকে এবং তার সংগীরা শিকারের জন্তু তার নিকটে তাড়িয়ে নিয়ে আসে।

তখন হুগলী কলেজ ছিল দুটি বিভাগে সম্পূর্ণ বিভক্ত। এক ভাগে ছিল ইংরেজী-পারসী বিভাগ, শুধু মুসলমান ছাত্রদের জন্য ; অন্য বিভাগ ছিল শুধু হিন্দু যুবকদের জন্য। উভয় সমাজের ছাত্রদের মধ্যে গভীর বন্ধুত্ব বিরাজ করত। কিন্তু তাদের

মধ্যে 'র‍্যাগীং' (Ragging) চলত। প্রধানতঃ মুসলিম ছাত্ররাই হিন্দু ছাত্রদের উপর 'র‍্যাগীং' চালাত---তাদের বই ও জিনিষপত্র কেড়েকুড়ে নিয়ে চলে আসত। এই সব কাজে আমাকে একজন দলপতি মনে করা হত। কলেজের অধ্যক্ষ মিঃ রবার্ট থয়েটস (Robert Thwaytes) কলেজে শান্তি রক্ষার কাজে আমার শরণাপন্ন হলেন। তাঁর প্রাক্তন ছাত্র এবং আমার ভাই ওয়ারিসের নামে তিনি আমার কাছে এই দাবী জানালেন। এর পর কর্তব্যজ্ঞানেই আমি অধ্যক্ষের সঙ্গে সহযোগিতা করেছি। ক্রমে ক্রমে কলেজে মুসলিম ছাত্রের সংখ্যা কমে গেল এবং ইঙ্গো-পারসী বিভাগ অন্য বিভাগের সঙ্গে মিশে গেল। আমার মনে হয় আমার বয়স যখন ১৫ কিংবা ১৬ তখন আমি অধ্যক্ষ মিঃ রবার্ট থয়েটসের সংস্পর্শে আসি। দীর্ঘ ঋজু সবল গঠন এবং শ্মশ্রুবিমণ্ডিত মিঃ থয়েটসকে বাইরে থেকে কিছুটা রূঢ় মনে হলেও ভেতরে তিনি ছিলেন খুব কোমল। আমার জীবনে তার স্নেহ মমতা অবিস্মরণীয় থাকবে। তিনি আমার জীবনের অন্যতম শ্রেষ্ঠ বন্ধু ছিলেন। আমার আব্বা ব্যতিত আর যে দুইজন আমার চিত্ত ও চরিত্রের উপর কল্যাণ প্রভাব রেখে গেছেন তারা হলেন এই অধ্যক্ষ মিঃ রবার্ট থয়েটস ও হুগলী ইমামবাড়ার মোতওয়াল্লী জনাব সৈয়দ কারামাত আলী সাহেব।

মনে পড়ে একদিন মিঃ থয়েটস আমাকে আমাদের ক্লাসে এসে ডেকে নিয়ে গেলেন। তিনি প্রায় আমার নাম ভুলে যেতেন এবং আমার ভাইয়ের নামেই অর্থাৎ ওয়ারিস বলে ডাকতেন। আমি কিছুটা চিন্তিত মনে তাঁর অনুসরণ করলাম। কিন্তু ভয়ের কোনো কারণ ছিল না। তিনি আমার সঙ্গে এখানে কলেজ বিভাগ পুনরায় খোলা নিয়ে আলোচনা করলেন। কয়েক বৎসর হতে এখানে কলেজ বিভাগ বন্ধ হয়ে গিয়েছিল। আমি কুড়িজন ছাত্রের এক নামের তালিকা মি: থয়েটসকে দিলাম। এবং এই দিয়েই আমাদের ম্যাট্রিকুলেশন পাশের পর হুগলীতে কলেজ বিভাগ পুনরায় চালু করা হল। প্রত্যেক বছরেই কিছু কিছু ছেলে চলে যায় এবং তাদের স্থান নতুন ছাত্র দিয়ে পূরণও হয়ে যায়।

একথা মনে করতে আমার আনন্দ হয় যে আমি মিঃ থয়েটসের বিশ্বাস ও বন্ধুত্বের যোগ্য হতে পেরেছিলাম যখন এই কলেজ হতেই আমি আমার এম, এ, ডিগ্রী নিতে সমর্থ হলাম। আমার এম, এ, পাশের পর তিনি আমার জন্য দুই বৎসরের একটি সিনিয়র স্কলারশিপের ব্যবস্থা করে দিয়েছিলেন।

(ক্রমশ:)

APPENDIX A

The Origin of the Musalmans of Bengal

By

KHONDKAR FUZLI RUBBEE

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1895

Reprinted from a photostat copy made for the East Pakistan History Association by Dr. K. M. Mohsin.

PREFACE.

As there are more Musalmans in Bengal than in any other province or part of India, several attmepts have been made to find a cause for this preponderance of the Musalman population of Bengal and also to trace their origin. But as no books have hitherto been published to throw light upon this subject, persons are generally apt, from want of correct information, to form erroneous opinions in the matter, and to offer in explanation any hypothesis which may happen to suggest itself to their imagination. I therefore commenced a diligent search among the pages of the histories and chronicles of Bengal, and obtained much of the requisite information and I have thus felt encouraged to write the present work. I further gathered as much information as possible from sources other than the above and have collected and condensed them all in this concise work which I have entitled *Haqiáqat-i Musalman-i-Bangalah*, or "The Origin of the Musalmans of Bengal." Should the reader detect any error in the following pages, I would trust to his indulgence for forgiveness, and would request to be apprised thereof in view to its rectifcation in the future.

I gratefully acknowledge the valuable help rendered to me, in the progress of this work, by my younger brother, Khondkar Ali Hyder, and my friend, Mirza Farrukh Saheb, of Delhi, and also to Moulvie Alqadari Syed Hasibul Hossain, B.A., author of the "Princeless Pearls," the "Lament of Islam," etc. who rendered valuable help in the translation of this work..

KHONDKAR FUZLI RUBBEE.

Murshidabad.

CONTENTS

THE ORIGIN

OF THE

MUSALMANS OF BENGAL

INTRODUCTION

According to the results arrived at by the Census of 1891 there were 23,658,347 Musalmans in the province of Bengal. Of this total there were in Bengal Proper 19,577,481, in Behar 3,504,487, in Orissa 92,468, in Chutia Nagpore 257,809, and in the Tributary States under the Government of Bengal (*viz.*, Kuch Behar, the several Hill Tracts and the Native States in Orissa and Chutia Nagpore) 183,670.

The entire Musalman population of India was returned in 1891 at fifty millions. Of this aggregate, something less than a half, 23,658,347, Musalmans, were in Bengal, Behar and Orissa, and 19,577,481 in Bengal Proper alone. Thus the number of Musalmans in Bengal Proper amounts to more than one-third of the entire Musalman population of India.

Adjoined are detailed abstract statements of the Musalman populations as belonging to the several divisions and districts of Bengal.

Detailed Statement of the Musalmans of Bengal according to the Report of Census, 1891.

Divisions.	Districts.	Number of Muslamans in each district.	Total.
	Burdwan ..	267,224	
	Bankoora ..	45,312	
	Birbhoom ..	169,752	
Burdwan ..	Midnapore ..	171,412	
	Hooghli ..	192,685	
	Howrah ..	152,806	999,191
	24-Pergunnahs ..	690,815	
	Calcutta ..	203,173	
	Nadia ..	947,390	
Presidency ..	Jessore ..	1,150,135	
	Murshidabad ..	618,653	
	Khulna ..	603,995	4,214,161
	Deenajpore ..	802,597	
	Rajshahye ..	1,033,927	
	Rangpore ..	1,295,411	
Rajshahye ..	Bogra ..	661,100	
	Pubna ..	999,809	
	Darjeeling ..	10,011	
	Jalpaigoori ..	222,475	5,025,330

Divisons.	Districts	Number of Musalmans in each district.	Total
Dacca ..	Dacca ..	1,473,799	
	Faridpore ..	1,096,030	
	Bakarganj ..	1,462,712	
	Maimansing ..	2,396,476	6,429,017
Chittagong ..	Chittagong ..	924,849	
	Noakhali ..	760,597	
	Tippera ..	1,224,336	2,909,782
Patna ..	Patna ..	201,086	
	Gaya ..	226,705	
	Shahabad ..	148,459	
	Darbhanga ..	338,667	
	Mozaffarpore ..	332,873	
	Saran ..	291,013	
	Champaran ..	267,319	1,806,122
Bhagulproe ..	Bhagulpore ..	195,391	
	Monghyr ..	191,770	
	Purnea ..	805,267	
	Maldah ..	384,651	
	Sonthal Pergunnahs ..	121,086	1,698,365
Summary ..	Bengal Proper ..	19,577,481*	
	Behar ..	3,504,487	
	Orissa ..	92,946	
	Chutia Nagpore ..	257,809	
	Kuch Behar ..	170,746	
	Orissa Tributary states ..	6,191	
	Chutia Nagpore Tributary State ..	6,733	23,658,347
	Grand Total ..	....	

*Including the following divisions:--Burdwan, Presidency, Dacca, Chittagong and Rajshahye.

The fact is apt to escape ordinary attention that in Bengal Proper the Mahommedans have an actual numerical majority of the population. On reference to the Administration Report of the Bengal Government recently published, I find that the Hindus in Bengal itself number 18,068,655, whilst the Mahommedans are put down at 19,582,349, an excess in their favour of more than one million. In Behar the Hindus are in a very large majority, more than 6 to 1, whilst in Orissa and Chutia Nagpore the Mahommedans are mere fractions of the community. The causes which have kept them out of Orissa and Chutia Nagpore have operated to reduce their numbers in Western Bengal, where I find the population thus divided between the two great classes:--

Hindus	..	.. 6,399,969
Mahommedans	..	.. 999,191

Taking the three provinces, I find that in Behar and Orissa, and the districts of Chutia Nagpore and Western Bengal, there are only five millions of Mahommedans, as against about 32 millions of Hindus. But in Central and Eastern Bengal the proportion is largely in favour of Mahommedans. For the whole of the territories administered by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, the population is thus divided:--

Hindus	..	.. 45,217,618
Mohammedans	..	.. 23,658,347

Central and Eastern Bengal comprise the four divisions or Commissionerships of the Presidency, Rajshahye, Dacca and Chittagong, and in these the population is divided as follows:--

Mohommedans	..	.. 18,583,158
Hindus	..	.. 11,668,686

In investigating the causes why there are such large numbers of Musalmans in Bengal and also in ascertaining their origin, *viz.*, as to whether their ancestors were native Hindus of this country who embraced Islam, or whether they are the descendants of the Musalmans of other countries who came and domiciled here, it is necessary to take into consideration (i) the evidence furnished by history; (ii) various Musalman traits and characteristics; (iii) the ethnological features and characteristics of these Musalmans, and (iv) the particulars cf their families.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

IT is mentioned in Chapter VII of *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* that in the year 600 A.H., corresponding with 1203 A.D., the first Mahommendan conquest of Bengal was effected by Bakhtyar Khilji, under the guidance of Kutbuddin Aibak, the Emperor of India at that time.

Mahomed Bakhtyar Khilji was one of the grandees of Ghor. He came to Ghazni during the reign of Sultan Ghias-ud-din Mahomed Sam, and after staying there for a short time, proceeded to India and attached himself to Malik Moazzam Hissam-ud-din, who was one of the most eminent grandees of Sultan Shahab-ud-din. Through the influence of this chief he obtained some *pergunnahs* as *jagir* in the Doabah, and as rewards for his valour and prowess he had the fiefs of Kambila and Betali conferred on him. In character he was very courageous, munificent and prudent. He was frequently engaged in expeditions against the turbulent and haughty chiefs of Behar and carried away great booty and wealth. Thus in a short time he became possessed of the means of magnificence and grandeur.

Many former inhabitants of Ghor, Ghazni and Khorasan, who on account of revolutions in their own countries had migrated to, and taken to a roving life in, India, flocked to Mahomed Bakhtyar Khilji on hearing the rumour of his intrepidity and justice. These marauders contributed in a great measure to consolidate his power and strengthen his position. When Kutb-ud-din Aibak, who was then Emperor of Delhi, received news of these events, he sent *Khilat* (*i,e.*, robes of honour and other gifts) to Mahomed Bakhtyar in token of his approbation of the latter's conduct. This imperial favour further strengthened his hands. He now subjugated the whole of Behar, effaced all vestige of Hindu power in that principality, and established a Musalman government in it. He invaded Bengal in 1203 A.D., and conquered the tracts known as Rarh and Barend. From early times Bengal was divided into three parts, *viz.*,Rarh,Barend and Bangodesh. When Mahomed Bakhtyar invaded Bengal, its ruler was Lachman Rai, who held his Court in the city of Nadia. This city as well as Luckhnawati was in Rarh, as has been mentioned in the *Tabaquat-i-Nasiri* --

"The territory of Luckhnawti has two wings on either side of the river Gnages. They call the western wing Rarh, and the city of Luckhnawti lies on that side, and the eastern wing is named Barend or Barendah and contains the city of Deokot."

It is stated in *Ferishta* that Rai Lachman had the seat of his government at Nadia which is in the territory of Luckhnawti. It is mentioned in

Tabaquat-i-Nasiri that a number of astrologers and Brahmins presented themselves before the Rajah and represented to him that in the books of their ancient sages it was foretold that the country would fall into the hands of the Turks (*i,e.*, Musalmans), and that when that time should come, the reigning Rajah should submit to them, so that the inhabitants might escape from the molestation of the Musalmans.

The Rajah asked the astrologers whether any token had been given in the books of their ancients with regard to the leader of the Moslem troops, by which to arrive at a correct conclusion. They replied that the indications of this leader would be that when he stood upright and let down his hands along his sides his fingers would reach beyond the point of his knee-joint. On receiving this answer Lachman deputed trustworthy persons to make investigation in this matter, and upon enquiry they found Mahomed Bakhtyar to possess the peculiarity ascribed to him, and informed the Rajah accordingly. The report produced a great commotion among the Brahmins and wise men, chiefs and lords of the country, and they retired in all haste to Jagunnath, Kamroop, and other remote places, which promised a safe and secure asylum. In fine, all the Brahmins who found it possible quitted their homes and settled in other provinces. But the idea of relinquishing his hereditary dominions and his home, after the manner of the Brahmins, was not agreeable to the Rajah, and he lingered in his capital until Mahomed Bakhtyar pressing on from Behar entered his capital city of Nadia and penetrated to the very gates of his palace. The Rajah then fled from his kingdom towards Bikrampore in Bangodesh. Mahomed Bakhtyar afterwards subjugated Luckhnawti and other territories, and caused the *khotba* to be read, and also struck coins in his own name. He caused the Musalmans who had come with him to settle in his newly-acquired dominions, as also such as joined him from time to time.*

Sir W. Hunter has written, on the authority of Dr. Blochmann, in his Statistical Accounts of Dacca, that the provinces of Barend and Rarh were conquered by the Musalmans in 1203 A.D., and the western tract called Bangodesh was subjugated by Mahomed Tughlak Shah in 1330 A.D.; and he made Gaur, Satgaun and Sonargaun respectively the seats of his Government.

From this time, namely, the year 1203 A.D., when the Moslem rule was first established in Bengal and the country began to be peopled with

*Malik Bakhtyar made Kasba Deogadh his capital and granted to his relatives considerable *wafi tenement* in that district.—From *the History of Soobah Behar.*

Musalman inhabitants,* down to the year 1765 A.D., when the English acquired the Diwani, that is, for a period of 562 years, the Moslem sway uninterruptedly prevailed in this country.

From the time of the government of Mahomed Bakhtyar Khilji down to that of Kadr Khan, Bengal formed a dependency of the throne of Delhi. During this period the Emperor of Delhi used to appoint Viceroys to govern Bengal. But in 1340 A.D. it became an independent kingdom under Sultan Fakhruddin, who assumed supreme power and set up as an independent monarch. Bengal retained its independence intact until it was subverted by Akbar in 1576 A.D. after the defeat of its ruler Daud Shah.

From this time down to the year 1765 A. D., when the East India Company obtained the Diwani of Bengal, the country remained subject to the control of the Mughal Emperors, and the Court of Delhi used to appoint the Nazims of Bengal. But even during this interval—when Nadir Shah, King of Iran, invaded India in the reign of the Emperor Mahmud Shah—Shuja Khan, who was then Governor of Bengal, threw off his allegiance to the throne of Delhi and assumed independence. This independence of the country lasted until it passed into the hands of the English.

During this period of 562 years, namely, from the advent of the Moslems down to that of the English in this country, different Musalman dynasties held in succession the imperial sway at Delhi. The first period (during which Mahomed Bakhtyar conquered Bengal) was that of the

* In *Asiatic Society's Journal, January* 1847, page 76:--

Dr. Buchanan suppposes that the Hindu Princes of Bengal continued to govern at Sonargaun, long after they had lost possession of the western portion of their kingdom, and that his part of the Province was not annexed to the dominions of the Mahommedan conquerors of the country until the time of Ferid-ud-din Soor Shere Shah. It is well known however, that there were Mahommedan Governors of the Eastern divison of Bengal prior to the reign of Shere Shah, and that Sonargaun was in subjection to them as early as the year 1279. It is probable, indeed, that there were Mahommedans in this part of Bengal, at a period long anterior to the conquest of the country by Bakhtyar Khilji in 1203. We are told that the Arabian merchants of Bussora carried on an extensive maritime commerce with India and China as early as the 8th century, and that many of them settled in the countries which they visited. Dr. Robertson, in speaking of Mahommedan traders in the East at this time, states: "They were so numerous in the city of Canton, that the Emperor (as Arabian authors relate) permitted them to have a Cadi or Judge of their own sect, who decided controversies among his countrymen by their own laws and presided in all the functions of religion. In other places proselytes were gained to the Mahommedan faith and the Arabian language was understood and spoken in almost every seaport of any note." (Robertson's "Ancient India," page 102). There is reason to believe, from this circumstance, that Bengal was the seat of a colony of Mahommedan merchants at this early period. This may be inferred from the extensive commerce it enjoyed with the countries of the West from early times; from the great value of its products; and above all, from the distinct allusion made to it by the two Mahommedan travellers of the 9th century. It is mentioned by them "as the country of a king named Rami, who possessed a great number of elephants. Its exports consisted of fine cotton garments, (Dacca muslins) ligu aloes, (Aggur wood) sable skins (Otter skins) and rhinoceros horns, all of which were to be purchased for shells, (Cowries) which were the current money of the country."

Ghorian dynasty which became extinct with the regin of Kykobad. It was succeeded in 1288 A.D. by the Khilji dynasty, which in turn gave place in 1321 to the Tughlak dynasty which ruled until 1414, and was followed by the Syyad dynasty which was replaced in 1526 by the Mughal dynasty or the House of Timoor.

A chronological list of the Governors, Kings and Nazims of Begal and also of the Emperors of Delhi follows:

Chronological list of the Governors, Independent Kings and the Nazims of Bengal and also of the Emperors of Delhi.

A.D.	A. H.	Nazims of Bengal	Emperors.
1203	600	Mahomed Bukhtyar Khilji ..	Kutb-ud-din Aibak.
MAHOMED BAKHTYAR ESTABLISHED HIS CAPITAL AT GHOR.			
1205	602	Mahomed Shirin, entitled Aziz-ud-din Khilji	Kutb-ud-din Aibak
1208	605	Ali Murdan Khan Khilji ..	Do.
1212	609	Hisam-ud-din Hosain, entitled Sultan Ghias-ud-din Khilji.	Aram Shah, son of Kutb-ud-din Aibak.

Sultan Ghias-ud-din caused the *khotba* to be read on his own behalf and coins to be struck in his own name in the territory of Luckhnawti.

A.D.	A. H.	Nazims of Bengal	Emperors.
1227	624	Nasir-ud-din Shah, son of Sultan Shams-ud-din Altamash.	Shams-ud-din Altamash
1229	627	Izzat-ul-Mulk Malick Ala-ud-din Khan	Do.
1237	634	Aziz-zud-din Togra Khan	Sultana Razia, daughter of Shams-ud-din Altamash
1244	642	Malick Kara Beg Timur Khan	Bahram Shah,son of Shams-ud-din Altamash
1246	644	Malick Saif-ud-din ..	Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmood, son of Shams-ud-din Altamash
1253	651	Malick Uzbak	Do.
1257	656	Malick Jalal-ud-din	Do.
1258	659	Arsalan Khan	Do.
1260	659	Tatar Khan, son of Arsalan Khan ..	Do.
1277	676	Tughral	Sultan Ghias-ud-din Bulban.

After the resources of the aged Sultan Ghias-ud-din had been exhausted in repelling the invasion of Changiz Khan's Mughals, Tughral, who was munificent and crafty,strengthened his own position and assuming independence caused the *khotba* to be read on his behalf.

After this, Sultan Ghias-ud-din invaded Bengal in person, killed Tughral and bestowed the kingdom on his son Boghra Khan, making over to him at the same time all the spoils that had been taken except the stud of elephants and the treasure, which he appropriated to himself. He placed the royal umbrella over his son's head, in whose name he also caused the *khotba* to be read and coins to be struck. He gave the following parting counsel to his son:--(1) That the ruler of Luckhnawti should not rebel against the authority of the Emperor of Delhi, whether that monarch belonged to his own or to a different family; that whenever that Emperor happened to advance upon Luckhnawti, its ruler should retire to some safe place; and that when the Emperor evacuated the country he should then return to his dominions and seek to promote his own objects. (2) That he should observe moderation and justice in exacting tribute from his subjects; that is to say, he should neither take so little as to embolden the obstinate to demur, nor should he demand so much that it might press heavily on the subjects. In a word, he should levy such tribute as would not be inconvenient for the people to pay. (3) That no public measures should be taken without consulting loyal and wise councillors. (4) That the Militia ought not to be neglected (5) That help should be taken from such as have retired from the world and devoted themselves to the Divine service. After having thus counselled, Ghias-ud-din Bulban left his son to govern Bengal and himself proceeded on his retun march to Delhi. Afrer this

Emperor's death in 686 A.H. the grandees of the Court of Delhi elevated Kykobad, son of Sultan Nasir-ud-din, to the imperial throne. In 688 A.H. Sultan Jalal-ud-din Feroze Shah Khilji who was one of the noblemen of the Court of Delhi, killed Kykobad and usurped the throne. Hence the Empire passed from the Ghorians to the Khilji dynasty. The reign of Bagra Khan, however, continued in Bengal until his death in 725 A.H. During his reign several monarchs sat in succession upon the throne of Delhi, *viz*.--(1) Jalal-ud-din Feroze Shah Khilji; (2) Ala-ud-din Khilji; (3) Shahab-ud-din, son of Ala-ud-din; (4) Sultan Kutb-uddin Mobarak Shah Khilji; (5) Sultan Ghias-ud-din Tughlak Shah, and (6) Mahomed Tughlak Shah. Boghra Khan regined in Bengal for 44 years and died a natural death.

1282	681	Boghra Khan, entitled Sultan Nasir-ud-din, son of Sultan Ghias-ud-din Bulban.	Sultan Ghias-ud-din Bulban
1325	725	Malick Bedad Khilji, entitled Kadr Khan	Sultan Mahomed Tughlak, son of Sultan Ghias-ud-din.

After the death of Sultan Nasir-ud-din, Sultan Mahomed Tughlak appointed Kadr Khan to the throne of Luckhnawti.

1340	741	Sultan Fakhr-ud-din ..	Sul an Mahomed Tughlak.

Since owing to the tyranny and cruelty of Sultan Mahomed Tughlak and also from the frequent occurrence of famines the Delhi empire had become weak and mutilated, Malick Fukhr-ud-din, one of the Ameers of Kadr Khan, killed the latter, and assuming the title of Sultan Fukhr-ud-din set up as an independent monarch.

1343	744	Haji Ilyas, entitled Sultan Shams-ud-din Bhangra.	Do

Fukhr-ud-din was killed by Ali Mobareck who occupied the throne for a brief space, but in turn was killed by Haji Ilyas, one of the noblemen of the realm, who then assumed the sovereignty under the title of Sultan Shams-ud-din and established an independent monarchy in Bengal. Under his judicious rule the country attained great prosperity, which was also due to the fact that owing to the disturbances which at this period prevailed in the Delhi empire, many noble aristocratic families migrated to and settled in Bengal. His reign was a long and prosperous one, and after his death his son succeeded him on the throne.

1358	760	Sultan Sikandar, son of Shams-ud-din Bhangra.	Sultan Feroze Shah Barbak, nephew of Sultan Ghias-ud-din Tughlak.

The reign of this monarch in Bengal was one of great peace and tranquillity, in both home and foreign relations.

1367	769	Sultan Ghias-ud-din, son of Sultan Sikandar.	Do.

Ghias-ud-din was a king of religious principles and just and upright disposition. He was a great benefactor of the aristocracy, and of learned and holy men. He invited to his capital persons of merit and genius from various countries and sent emissaries to bring the celebrated poet Hafiz of Shiraz to his court at Luckhnawti.

1373	775	Saif-ud-din, styled Sultan-us-Salatin, son of Ghias-ud-din.	Do.

After the death of Sultan Ghias-ud-din the grandees placed Saif-ud-din on the throne and gave him the title of Sultan-us-Salatin.

1383	785	Sultan Shams-ud-din, son of Sultan-us-Salatin.	Do.

This king was humane, benificent and brave. Sitting upon his ancestral throne, he governed according to the laws and customs of his predecessors. He was treacherously murdered by Rajah Kans, who was one of the Ameers of the realm, and who then seized the throne.

1385	787	Rajah Kans	Do.

Rajah Kans acted tyrannically towards the Musalmans and caused the holy persons and learned men to be killed. He treacherously procured the assassination of Shaikh Badred-ul-Islam Abbasi. He also caused a number of learned men to be placed on board a vessel

and had them all drowned. The wholesale murders and other acts of cruelty of the Rajah tried the patience and forbearance of Hazrat Noor Kutbi Alam, who was the spiritual leader both of the late King and of his Musalman subjects, and he invited Sultan Ibrahim Sharki of Jonepore to invade the country. The Rajah then prostrated himself before this holy individual and supplicated that his son might be converted to Islam and placed on the throne. The holy man then converted the Rajah's son to Islam, styled him Jalal-ud-din, and invested him with the sovereignty.

1392	794	Sultan Jalal-ud-din, son of Rajah Kans.	Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mohmed Shah, son of Sultan Feroze Shah

Sultan Jalal-ud-din reassembled the learned and the holy men, who had been dispersed on account of the cruelty and oppression of his father, and showed them great consideration and honor. During his reign the government acquired great stability and power, and the city of Pundwah reached such a flourishing condition as to surpass all the other cities of India.

1409	812	Sultan Ahmed Shah, son of Jalal-ud-din Shah.	Sultan Mahmood Shah, son of Sultan Nasir-ud-din Shah.

Ahmad Shah was a great tyrant and wantonly butchered men, so that the people were greatly harassed and became disaffected. At last, Shadi Khan and Nasir Khan, who were nobles of his Court, assassinated him in concert, and the latter seized the throne.

1426	830	Sultan Nasir-ud-din Shah ..	Sultan Maiz-zuad-din Mobarak Shah, son of Khizir Khan.

The Ameers of Ahmad Shah put Nasir Khan to death and placed on the throne Sultan Nasir-ud-din, who was a descendant of Sultant Shams-ud-din Bhangar, and whom they found after search in a village where he used to procure his livelihood by agriculture. He proved to be a patriotic sovereign, and reassembled those courtiers who had gone away during the reigns of Kans, Jalal ud-din and Ahmad Shah. The reputation of his excellent qualities attracted people to his dominions from different territories and under his mild and beneficent rule all classes of people prospered and were happy. He reigned for 32 years in an excellent manner.

1457	862	Barbak Shah, son of Nasir-ud-din Shah.	Sultan Bahlool Lodi

He was also an excellent ruler. During his reign both his subjects and the army were in a happy and prosperous condition.

1474	879	Sultan Yusaf Shah, son of Barbak Shah.	Do.

Sultan Yusaf Shah was of a mild temper and a benefactor of his people, and was just, learned and religious. He was strictly impartial in dispensing justice according to the Mahommedan Law.

1482	887	Sultan Fateh Shah, son of Yusaf Shah.	Sultan Bahlool Lodhi.

Fateh Shah was learned and wise. He ruled in accordance with the usages and customs of the preceding Sovereign. Sultan Shahzadah, a eunuch slave, killed him and seized the throne.

1491	896	Sultan Shahzadah, entitled Sultan Barbak	Sultan Sikandar, son of Bahlool Lodi

Sultan Barbak filled the Court with low-class men, ousting for them the hereditary grandees. Malek Andhal the Abyssinian put him to death and seized the throne.

1492	897	Malek Andhal, entitled Feroze Shah.	Do.

Under the just and benificent rule of Feroze Shah people enjoyed security of property and perosn and both the subjects and the army were satisfied with him. He died a natural death.

1494	899	Sultan Mahmood Shah, son of Feroze Shah.	Do.

Sidi Badar, the Abyssinian, put Mahmood Shah to death and took the reins of government.

1495	900	Sidi Badar, the Abyssianian, entitled Sultan Muzaffar Shah.	Do.

Muzaffar Shah put to death all the learned men, the gentry and the pious men who were dissatisfied with him. At last Syyad Sharif Makki, who was his Wazir, in conjunction with the other Ammeers, assassinated him and assumed the sovereignty.

1498	903	Syyad Sharif Makki, entitled Sultan Ala-ud-din, and known as Hosain Shah Badshah.	Sultan Sikandar, son of Bahlool Lodi.

This king was of a just disposition and a cherisher of the nobility and gentry. He showed favour to persons of noble descent and the artistocratic Ameers. He appointed pious men, Syyads and Mughals and Afghans of high family as Ammals in his kingdom, and thus remedied the evils caused by the misrule of the Abyssinian Sultans and restored peace and tranquillity to the country; and under his judicious government the kingdom gained prosperity. He granted numerous freehold tenements to the holy men, Syyads and other spiritual leaders, and he endowed the shrine of the saint, Noor Kutbi Alam, with the revenues of many villages. After a long reign he died a natural death.

Historians relate that Syyad Shrif Makki with his brother, Syyad Yusaf, and father, Syyad Ashraf Makki, who was a native of the city of Termiz, chanced to come to Bengal and the trio fixed their residence at a mouzah called Chandpore in the terriotory of Rarh. Here Syyad Shrif commenced his studies under the preceptorship of the Kazi of the place. As he was of noble lineage the Kazi gave his daughter to him in marriage. He afterwards presented himself at the Court of Mozaffar Shah, who made him his Wazir; and after the assassination of that king the Ameers of the Court elevated him to the throne.

1521	927	Sultan Nusrat Shah, son of Sultan Ala-ud-din Hosain Shah.	Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, son of Sikandar Lodi.

In the reign of this king, Humayoon Badshah put to death Sultan Ibrahim Lodi and seated himself on the throne of Delhi and reduced most of the provinces of Hindustan to his sway. Most of the chiefs and nobles of that empire, therefore, fled and sought the protection of Nusrat Shah. Even Sultan Mahmood, brother of the late Emperor, fled into Bengal and obtained here the grant of pergunnas and villages for his maintenance in a manner befitting his rank and position. Ibrahim Lodi's daughter, who had come with this refugee to Bengal, became the wife of Nusrat Shah.

1534	940	Sultan Mahmood Shah Bengali, son of Ala-ud-din Hosain Shah.	Hymayoon Badshah.
1541	946	Khizir Khan	Shere Shah Badshah.

Sher Shah expelled Humayoon from Delhi and became the Emperor of Hindoostan. He also wrested the sovereignty of Bengal from Sultan Mahmood Bengali and appointed Khizir to its government.

1545	952	Mahomed Khan Sur ..	Salim Badshah.
1555	962	Bahadur Shah Salim Khan ..	Mahomed Shah Adil.
1560	968	Jalal-ud-din Shah ..	Do.
1564	971	Soleman Shah Karani Afghani ..	Do.

Soleman Shah removed the capital of Bengal from Ghor to Tanda.

1573	981	Daud Shah, son of Soleman Shah. ..	Jalal-ud-din Akbar Badshah.

In the reign of this ruler Akbar Badshah conquered Bengal in 1570 A.D. and annexed it to his dominions.

Governors under the Mughal Dynasty.

1576	984	Nawab Khan Jahan ..	Jalal-ud-din Akbar Badshah.

Khan Jahan captured Daudkhan, and the latter was put to death. Under the administration of Khan Jahan, Bengal and Behar became subject to the regular government of Akbar. He removed again the capital of Bengal from Tanda to Ghor.

1597	987	Muzafer Khan ..	Jalal-ud-din Akbar
1580	988	Rajah Todar Mal ..	Do.
1582	990	Khan-i-Azam	Do.
1584	992	Shahbaz Khan	Do.
1589	997	Rajah Man Singh	Do.

Rajah Man Singh removed the capital to Rajmahal.

1606	1015	Kutb-ud-din Khan	Jahangir Badshah.
1607	1016	Jahangir Kooli Khan ..	Do.
1608	1017	Shaikh Islam Khan ..	Do.

Islam Khan removed the capital from Rajmahal to Dacca.

1613	1022	Kasim Khan, son of Islam Khan	Jahangir Badshah.
1618	1028	Ibrahim Khan Fateh Jang	Do.
1622	1032	Shah Jahan, son of Jahangir	Do.
1625	1033	Khana Nawaz Khan ..	Do.
1626	1035	Nowab Mukarrom Khan ..	Do.
1627	1036	N. Fidai Khan	Do.
1628	1037	N. Kasim Khan	Shah Jahan Badshah.
1632	1042	N. Azam Khan	Do.
1637	1047	N. Jolam Khan Mashhadi ..	Do.
1639	1049	Shahzadah Sultan Mahomed Shuja, son of Shah Jahan. ..	Do.
1660	1070	Nowab Meer Jumla ..	Awrangzeb Badshah.
1664	1074	Nowab Shayesta Khan ..	Do.
1677	1087	Nowab Fedai Khan	Do.
1678	1088	Shahzadah Sultan Mahomed Azam	Do.
1680	1090	Nowab Shaista Khan. ..	Do.
1689	1099	N. Ibrahim Khan Sani (II) ..	Do.
1697	1108	Prince Azim-oosh-shan ..	Do.
1704	1116	Nowab Murshed Kooli Khan ..	Do.

Murshed Kooli Khan removed the capital from Dacca to Murshidabad.

1725	1139	Nowab Shuja-ud-din Mahomed Khan	Mahomed Shah Badshah.

Taking advantage of the convulsions and weakness of the Delhi Empire, Nowab Shuja-ud-din Mahomed Khan assumed absolute powers and began to govern the country on his own account. From this time Bengal again became an independent State.

1739	1151	Nowab Sarfaraz Khan, son of Shuja-ud-din Khan.	Mahomed Shah Badshah.
1740	1153	Nowab Alivardi Khan ..	Do.
1756	1170	Nowab Siraj-ud-dowlah ..	Alamgir II.
1757	1171	Nowab Mir Mahomed Jaffer Khan	Do.
1764	1178	Nowab Najm-od-dowlah ..	Shah Alam.

We may now proceed to trace the reasons for the large Musalman population of Bengal Proper. During the very long period that Bengal remained under the Musalman sway, it enjoyed a greater degree of peace and security than any other part of Hindustan or indeed than any Musalman country throughout the world. Moreover, the Musalmans had here an independent government of their own. Agani, on account of the natural defences by which the couutry is protected, it has always enjoyed immunity from foreign invasions, and consequently it formed a great asylum for the Musalmans.* Furthermore, the richness of its soil and the abundance of its productions attracted men from other countries to settle in it. For all these reasons, the population of the country was ever on the increase and thus it was that this province became inhabited by larger number of Musalmans than any other part of India.

From 1204 A.D. to 1765 A.D., that is to say, during a period of 561 years, 76 Musalman Governors, Kings and Nazims successively ruled Bengal. Out of these, 16 Governors held their appointments from the *Ghori* and *Khilji* Emperors, 26 were independent Sovereigns,

* Hamilton's "Hindoostan and Reazus Salatin."

including the rulers who were contemporaneous with the reign of Sher Shah, and the remaining 34 were Nazims under the Mughal Emperors. The 76 rulers who governed this country during these 562 years, were all of either Afghan, Moghul, Iranian or Arab origin, except Kans, Jalal-ud-din Shah, Ahmad Shah and Rajahs Todermal and Mansingh. Owing to this foreign origin of its Sovereigns numbers of Musalmans of all classes and conditions came from Afghanistan, Turkistan, Iran, Arabia, distant parts of India and other countries, and settled in Bengal. Some of these Musalmans came with the conquerors of Bengal, others came on account of disturbances and revolutions in their own native lands, and some came merely in search of employment or livelihood.

In support of these assertions regarding the influx of Musalman people into this country, during the period specified, from various climes or regions, I may recount here some of the events related in the various histories which were the cause of this infiux.

When Mahomed Bakhtyar Khilji made the conquest of Bengal, large numbers of Afghans, Moghuls and Iranians came with him into the country. He was himself an Afghan leader. He subjugated Bengal and Behar with a countless host of Musalmans, and established a Musalman Government in these territories. He granted *jagirs* to his Ameers and relations and threby caused them to settle in these newly acquired dominions.

Hissam-ud-din Hosain, entitled Sultan Ghias-ud-din Khilji, ruled Bengal from 1214 to 1227. He showed much consideration to the Musalman nobility and gentry, the lerned men and holy persons. During his reign numbers of Musalmans came to Bengal from other countries. He caused Syyads, ecclesaistics and learned men to settle in his dominions by granting them *Aima* and rent-free lands. Maulana Siraj-uddin Siraj writes in his *Tabaquat-i-Nasiri* as follows regarding this Sovereign :-

"The affairs of Malik Hissam-ud-din reached such a point that the coin of the territory of Luckhnawti was stamped and the *Khotba* thereof read in his name, and they styled him by the title of Sultan Ghias-ud-din. He made the city of Luckhnawti the seat of his government......and people from all directions turned their faces towards him.

"He was a man of pleasing mien, of exceeding handsome appearance, and both physically and mentally was adorned with the perfection of goodness; and through his liberality and favour all acquired great benefits and reaped numerous blessings. In that country many marks of his goodness remained. He founded *jami* (cathedrals) and other *mosques*, and conferred salaries and stipends upon good men, upon theologians, upon the priesthood and upon the descendants of the Prophet....When the writer of these words, in the year 641, reached the terroritory of Luckhnawti, the good works of that Sovereign, in different parts of that territory, were beheld by him."

Boghra Khan—styled Sultan Nasir-ud-din, son of Sultan Ghias-ud-din Bulban, Emperor of Hindustan, and a grandson of Sultan

Shams-ud-din Altamash by the female side—ruled Bengal for 45 years, from A.D. 1282 to A.D. 1325. He was a great cherisher of the gentry and nobility, an appreciator of merit, and a correct estimator of men's characters. The poet Ameer Khosroo has written a good deal in his praise. His son Moiz-zud-din Kykobad succeeded to the throne of Delhi after the death of Sultan Ghias-ud-din Bulban, and he himself remained content with his government of Bengal. Kykobad gave himself up to luxury and sensual enjoyments and totally neglected the affairs of the Empire. Disloyal and mischievous persons took this opportunity to undermine his power with a view to his final overthrow, and so they instigated him to persecute those Ameers who were loyal and attached to the imperial house, by bringing false charges against them. At last the result was that Sultan Jalal-ud-din Feroze Shah Khilji, who was one of the Ameers of the Empire, killed Kykobad and seized his throne. At this point the Ghori Dynasty of Delhi came to an end, and the imperial sway passed to the house of Khilji. The dominion of the Ghorian Dynasty, namely, the rule of Sultan Nasir-ud-din Boghra Khan, however, continued unchanged in Bengal after this event. Consequently the faithful supporters of the Ghori Dynasty of Delhi, primarily owing to the persecutions of Kykobad and finally on account of the overthrow of his government, fled into Bengal and placed themselves under the protection of Boghra Khan.

The particulars of this event are narrated at great length in history. I therefore propose to give here only a summary of its account as given in the *Ferishta*, *Tabaquat-i-Akbari* and the like other histories.

Moiz-zud-din Kykobad, son of Nasir-ud-din Boghra Khan, became Emperor of Delhi after the death of Ghias-ud-din Bulban. After his accession to the throne, he gave the reins to his youthful passions and sunk into luxury and sensual pleasures. In his time, the minstrel and buffoon classes, rose into great favour and prominence. Malick Nizam-ud-din found access to him and was made Premier of the Satate, and the sole power of government fell into his hands. Seeing the Emperor thus lost in luxury and pleasure and totally neglecting State affairs, Malick Nizam-un-din conceived a desire to seize the throne; and as a step towards the achievement of this end, sowed the seeds of distrust and discord between the Emperor and his Ameers; and succeeded in getting rid of most of the latter as were loyal and faithful, causing them (by fabricating against them charges of various kinds) either to be put to death, or to be exiled or imprisoned in distant and remote places.

When Nasir-ud-din Boghra Khan heard the news of his son's negligent behaviour and the great power weilded by Malick Nizam-ud-din, he wrote to his son, from Bengal, expostulating with him on the impropriety of his conduct. Finding all his remonstrances ineffectual, he set out in person towards Delhi. Malick Nizam-ud-din, by his machinations, all but succeeded in bringing about a rupture between the father and the son, but happily he failed in his purpose, and at last the father and the son had a friendly meeting. After a brief halt, the father marched back to Bengal, having given some wholesome counsel to his son, who thereupon returned to his Capital City, Delhi. But as soon as Nasir-ud-din was gone, Kykobad consigned all his good advice to oblivion and relapsed into his former evil ways.

When the former heard of his son's relapse into luxury and sensuality, he despaired both of his life and the stability of his government.

About this time Malick Nizam-ud-din was assassinated by means of poison, and Kykobad became a prey to paralysis and apoplexy as a consequence of his drunken and intemperate habits. During his illness some of the powerful Ameers conceived hopes of seizing the throne; but the other Ameers coming speedily to an agreement brought his son, named Kyoomoors, who was but three years old, from the harem, and placing him on the throne, styled him Shams-ud-din. Now the Ameers became divided into two factions, the party of the Khiljis sided with Jalal-ud-din Feroze Shah, while that of the Turks took up the cause of Kyoomoors.

The partizans of Jalal-ud-din Feroze Khilji seized the person of Kyoomoors, and wrapped Kykobad, who had still a remnant of life left, in a blanket and, having suffocated him, threw his body into the Jumna.

At this time the Imperial sway passed from the hands of the Ghori slaves to the house of Khilji.

When Sultan Fakhr-ud-din withdrew his allegiance from the throne of Delhi and established an independent sovereignty in Bengal and became the absolute master of the country and its revenues, Mahomed Tughlak was then the Emperor of India. This Emperor's slaughter of the ecclesiastics and Syyads and of the men of the civil and military professions gained him such notoriety, and the country became so filled with his cruelty and tyranny, that numerous families came from Hindustan and went to seek shelter in Bengal. Moreover, during the reign of this monarch severe famines occurred twice in Delhi and its dependencies, and all the population thereof fled to Bengal to avoid the disasters of these famines. In

evidence of the occurrence of these events, I quote the following extract from the *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*:--

"Sultan Mahomed Tughlak was utterly unscrupulous in doing violence and oppression and shedding innocent blood and in persceuting and tyrannizing over God's people. He acted in this respect both against reason and the laws of Shara, as though he meant to empty the world of human creatures. No week passed in which he did not persecute the *unitarian* ecclesiastics, *Syyads*, *Soofis*, *Kalandars* or *Monks*, writers and soliders, and in which he did not shed blood. Hidden fires of sedition having blazed upon every side, none of the distant dependencies, except Deoghar and Gujarat, remained in the Emperor's possession. Being thus provoked, he betook himself the more to the persecution of his people. The report of the Emperor's tyranny intensified the disgust of the people which augmented the disturbances and the occurrences of disastrous events. As owing to the scarcity of rain, the efforts of the Emperor in regard to agriculture had no beneficial result, he necessarily gave orders for the gates of the city (Delhi) to be thrown open and for the liberation of the inhabitants whom he had forcibly detained within it. Those who had remained alive dragged themselves to Bengal with their wives and children."

Regarding the same subject, the author of the *Tabaquat-i-Akbari* writes as follows:--

"Of the distant provinces, none remained in the king's possession except Deoghar and Gujrat, and disturbances and disorders occurred everywhere. Mahomed Tughlak consequently chafed and fretted and in the bitterness of his temper increased the rigiours of his persecutions. On hearing the report of the king's oppressions, the people became highly disgusted, and this contributed to aggravate the unhappy state of affairs. The king made efforts to increase and extend cultivation, but owing to the drought, no benefit accrued from his endeavours (in this direction). At last he was forced by necessity to order the city gates to be thrown open and to let the inhabitants who had been detained (within the city) by force and against their will, go whithersoever they chose. Most of the men with their families and dependants betook themselves at this time to Bengal."

In fact, however, throughout the reign of Mahomed Tughlak people from Delhi and its surrounding country went to seek shelter in Bengal, as will be evident from the following accounts given in the *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* (page 139):-

"Emin-ul-Mulk, falling into delusions and being led away by wild ideas, thought within himself, it seems hard to learn that the king wants to recall his tutor Fateh Kooli Khan from the Deccan, the whole of which country he has brought so perfectly under control and by his efficient administration has reduced the bulk of the population, for the purpose of having him about his person and sending me in his place. But the real intention of the king must hereby be to remove me from these parts and (ultimately) casuse my ruin." At this time it had so happened that a number of clerks were suspected of embezzlement and the king had passed sentence of death upon them. These, however, contrived to leave Delhi under the pretext of scarcity; and proceeding to Oudh and Zafarabad, placed themselves under the protection of Emin-ul-Mulk, who on this account found the King's mind changed towards himself. At this juncture, seeeing no other remedy except pursuing the course of disobedience and crime, he raised the standard of rebellion; and ostensibly in pursuance of the King's orders sent for the troops and summoned his brother from Oudh and Zafarabad. Those whom he had summoned were still on their way, when one night Emin-ul-Mulk, issuing from Sagar Dowara, joined them. His brothers, hoisting the standard of daring and boldness came with all speed to the environs of Sagar Dowara with 4,000 horse, and drove before them,towards the place of encampment, all the king's elephants and horses that were grazing in the adjacent plains. The king in his perplexity summoned the troops of Amroha, Samanah, Kole and Baran, and Khaja Jahan also joined the king with the troops of Delhi. The king drew up his force for battle, and Emin-ul-Mulk and his brothers also having crossed the Ganges came to meet him in the hope that as the people were disaffected with the king they might make common cause with them. On the following day they set their forces in battle array in the plains of Kanauj. The king became enraged at their audacity, and determining their utter destruction rode against them in person. Emin-ul-Mulk and his brothers were completely astounded when they were informed of this fact, and after making only a short stand took to flight. Emin ul-Mulk him-

self was captured alive. One of his brothers, named Shukrullah Khan, who had been wounded, was drowned in the waters of the Ganges, and his other brother died in the flight. Some (of the rebel host) with their horses and accoutrements found watery graves, and those who got to the other shore, more dead than alive, met with their death, being killed by a sea monster. The king declared there was no vice in Emin-ul-Mulk, but that he had been instigated to it by others. He consequently called him to his presence, and after presenting him with a horse and robes of honor appointed him to the government of extensive territories. From this place the king went to Bahreich, and from thence he sent Khaja Jahan to precede him in the direction of Luckhnawti and to prevent those of Emin-ul-Mulk's troops who had escaped the edge of the sword from going into that territory."

During the reigns of Sultan Shams-ud-din Bhangra, Sultan Sikandar, son of Sultan Shams-ud-din, Sultan Ghias-ud-din, son of Sultan Sikandar, Sultan Nasir-ud-din and Sultan Barbak, much consideration used to be shown towards the gentry and nobility. For this reason and also on account of other excellent qualities of these sovereigns, numbers of persons of good families came, from time to time, from their own countries and settled in Bengal. * Detailed particulars of these events will be found in the accounts of the reigns of these rulers.

Syud Sharif of Mecca, entitled Sultan Ala-ud-din, and commonly called Hassan Shah Badshah, himself belonged to a very high and respectable family and was unequalled in learning and personal excellencies. During his reign Bengal attained to a highly flourishing and prosperous condition, and innumerable Musalmans of all orders poured into Bengal from every region and clime. This king, in particular, used to confer great benefits on persons belonging to good and ancient families, and throughout Bengal appointed Syyad, Mughal and Afghan *ammals* (officers), and allotted a good deal of rent-free lands to the Moslem religious leaders. When Hosain Shah Sharki of Jamepore reached Koholgaun, in the territory of Luckhnawti, after being defeated and pursued up to the frontier of Behar by Sultan Sikandar, Emperor of Delhi, Ala-ud-din Hosain Shah, who was then ruler of Bengal, received him honourably and maintained him in a way befitting his rank and dignity, and provided him with the means of comfort and luxury, so that the ex-ruler, abandoning his sovereign claims, passed the rest of his life in Bengal. † Another refugee of rank, Hosain Khan Kirmili, Governor of Saran, came to Luckhnawti, with his adherents and dependants, owing to the hostile feelings evienced towards him by Sultan Sikandar, and, took refuge with Hosain Shah, King of Bengal.

In the reign of Sultan Nasrat Shah, son of Sultan Ala-ud-din Hosain Shah, King Humayoon, having invaded India, slew the Emperor Ibrahim Lodi and threw the whole empire into convulsions and confusion, and be-

* See History of Bengal, by C. Stewart, p. 72.

† See History of Bengal, by C. Stewart, p. 74.

came master of most parts of Hindustan. In consequence of this confusion and the revolution in the government, many nobles and principal men of the realm, fled into Bengal to seek the protection of Sultan Nasrat Shah. Even the very family of the late Emperor Ibrahim Lodi took shelter in this country, and his daughter was married to Sultan Nasrat Shah. These circumstances have been related in the *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* thus:--

"When the King Nasiruddin Mahomed Humayoon slew Ibrahim Shah Lodi, son of Sikandar Lodi, and became master of the vast empire of Hindustan, most of the Afghan nobles fled into Bengal and placed themselves under the protection of Nasrat Shah, and at last Sultan Mahmood, brother of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, went also to Bengal. All these, according to their respective ranks and positions, and so far as circumstances allowed, received assignments of suitable *pergunn ths* and villages; and the daughter of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, who through the recent disturbances had been driven into that country, became wedded to King Nasrat Shah."

The practice also prevailed during the reigns of the monarchs belonging to the house of Sher Shah that whichever of the Ameers had to fly from Delhi, he used to come to Bengal for protection, as is thus related in the chronicles of the reign of Shah Mahomed, commonly called Adli Shah:-

"That on the same day Taj Khan Karani, who was one of the principal Ameers of Salim Shah, issuing from the Dewan Khana of Fort Gowaliar was going away, when Shah Mahomed Kirmili met him near the gate and questioned him relative to his condition. Taj Khan told him (in reply): 'Circumstances have taken an adverse turn, and I have withdrawn myself from these affairs. Come you also and unite with me,'. Shah Mahomed did not agree to his proposal, and went to make his homage to Adli Shah, and he met there with such fate as he did. While Taj Khan Karani, having quitted the Fort, had been proceeding in the direction of Bengal, Adli was meditating the capture of Ibrahim Khan Sur, who lived in great pomp and grandeur. His wife, who was the sister of Adli, being apprised of this fact, warned her husband of it. Ibrahim Khan then flying from Chatar, set off for the presence of his father, Ghazi Khan, who held the government of Handoon. Adli Isa Khan Niazi went in pursuit, and overtaking him near Kalpi, fighting took place between them, in which Isa Khan being worsted, desisted from further pursuit. Ibrahim Khan Sur collecting an army seized the throne; and having caused the *Khotba* to be read on his own behalf, he pressed from that place upon Agra; and having become possessed of the adjoining territories, perfectly consolidated his power. He then assumed the title of Ibrahim Shah and raised the standard of royalty."

"Hemu, grocer, the Wazir of Adli, considered the expulsion of King Ibrahim necessary, broke his power near Kalpi. King Ibrahim made use of a pretext for going to his father. Hemu, grocer, advancing upon that place, laid siege to it for three months. But since Mahomed Khan Sur, Governor of Bengal, having raised the standard of hostitlity, had advanced to subjugate Chatar, Jaunpore and Kalpi, Adli recalled Hemu the grocer, who in obedience to this summons then raised the siege. King Ibrahim then went towards the territory of Patna, and having fought an engagement with Rajah Ram Chander, the Rajah of the palace, was taken prisoner. Rajah Ram Chander, acting upon the policy of the time, seated him with utmost respect upon his own throne and acted towards him like as ervant. After some time quarrels arose between the Afghans of Bayanah, who lived within the limits of Ryseen and Ayaz Bahadur, the Governor of Malwa. The former (party in contention) sent a deputation to Rajah Ram Chander, and got Ibrahim Shah among them and made him their chief. They wished to call in the aid of Doorgawati, Rani of Gadhyya, and then make war with Ayaz Bahadur. She accepted their invitation and marched out of her territory. Ayaz Bahadur despatched his emissaries to her and made her turn away from her purpose. When Ibrahim Shah saw that Rani Doorgawati, repenting of her proceedings, had gone back to her territory, he did not consider his longer stay there would be prudent and consequently went to Orissa, which is one of the outlying territories of Bengal, and there he ended his days."

Sikandar Shah Sur, who was last of the line of Afghan monarchs, and at the end of whose reign the empire passed from the House of Sher Shah to that of Timoor, abandoning his throne, fled into Bengal, after being defeated by Jalal-ud-din Akbar, as would appear from the following extract from *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* :--

"It so happened at that time that Humayoon Badshah bent his course towards the Panjab, and Tatar Khan fled from Ruhtas to Delhi *en route* for the Panjab. The Mughal followers of Humayoon having advanced up to Lahore dispresed the Afghans, and having extended their conquest up to Sirhind brought those tracts under their control. Sikandar Shah sent an army of fifty thousand troops or, according to other accounts, one hundred thousand Afghans and Rajput horsemen) under the command of Tatar Khan and Hybat Khan for the expulsion of the Chaghtai host.

"The Afghans were totally routed, and having turned their horses' head they did not draw rein until they arrived at Delhi. Although Sikandar Shah was perfectly aware of the hostile feelings of his Ameers, yet, acting upon the requirements of necessity, he assembled an army sixty thousand strong and marched towards the Panjab in 962 A.H. He encountered Byram Khan, Turkoman, who was in the retinue of Primce Jalal-ud-din Mahomed Akbar near Sirhind, and being put to the route, retired to the mountains of Swalak. Thus for the second time the metropolitan cities of Delhi and Agra passed into the hands of the Ameers of King Humayoon, and the world became so adorned with beauties and charms as to vie with the gardens of Paradise. Through the well-aimed efforts of Byram Khan, Turkoman, Sikandar Shah Sur was dislodged from the mountain of Swalak, whence he fled towards Gaur and Bengal. He took possession of those territories, and after a short time died there, and Taj Khan Karani became the ruler of Bengal in his place."

In the same history the following particulars are given in the accounts of the reign of the Emperor Akbar:--

"After the siege of the Fort of Mankot had lasted for six months, Sikandar Shah was reduced to the necessity of soliciting the deputation of a trustowrthy nobleman to him so that after having submitted his terms through him he might act according as he might be ordered. Accordingly Khan-i-Azam Shams-ud-din Mahmad Khan Atka went to the fort. Sikandar told him, 'Owing to the multiplicity of my crimes I cannot venture into the King's presence, but I whish to send my son Shaikh Abdur Rahman to the Court and myself to withdraw to Bengal and live there in submission.' Khan-i-Azam Shams-ud-din came back and conveyed these proposals to the King, who accepted them. Shaikh Abdur Rahman came to the King's presence in the month of Ramzan 964, and offered some elephants as a present, and Sikandar Shah took the oportunity to go to Bengal.'

In order to weaken the power of the learned men and other leaders of Islam, the Emperor Akbar used to collect them and send them away to Bengal, as the following fact, written by Abdul Kader Badwani in his accounts of the Emperor Akabar on page 278 of *Mantakhabat Tawarikh*, shows:-

"In the reign of the Emperor Akbar, the learing itself, which men acquired, became the cause of their misfortune and decline. The Emperor used to order all the learned and holy men and spiritual leaders of the people to be brought into his Court and to enquire himself into the means of their subsistence and profession, and closely conversing with them both in public and private with usual regard, settled some land upon them as he thought proper. Those whom he knew to be in the habit of gathering disciples or keeping company with them in the *Majlis* (assembly) *Sama* or *Kulalic* (an assembly in the form of a circle when religious songs are sung to excite the hearers) he held them to be professional traders, and either shut them in the forts or transported them to Bengal and Behar, and things of this sort were always happening during his reign. All the aged and frail peers and sheiks (holy and pous men) were objects of much more pity than the other people; but the details of all this are too lengthy to be mentioned here.

"In obedience to such royal orders the *Sufis*, *Sahib Sama* (i.e. devotees and saints who held *Majlis-i-Sama* and devotions towardrs God) were brought under the control and order

of the Hindu officers, and were reduced to such misery that they forgot their own position; and being exiled from their homes entered into the mouse-holes that is, hid themselves in nooks and corners, and their circumstances were completely changed.'

Daud Shah, son of Soliman Shah, was the last of the kings of Bengal. Daud Shah had a numerous retinue of servants and followers, and his power and resources were so great that he had 40,000 well-mounted cavalry, 300 elephants and 140,000 infantry including artillerymen, musqueteers, archers and bowmen; he had besides 20,000 pieces of ordnance, most of which were battering guns, a considerable number of war vessels and other implements of war.—*From Riaz-us-Salatin.* In the reign of Akbar, and in the year 984 A. H. he was captured by Khan Jahan Khan in Bengal and put to death. After this event, Bengal came under the sway of the Mughal or Timurian dynasty. Henceforth Nazims or Governors of Turanian and Arab origin used to be appointed by the Court of Delhi to govern Bengal. During the administration of these Musalman Nazims and rulers, large numbers of Musalmans came from various countries and settled here, more especially during the administration of Nawab Ameer-ul-Omara Shaista Khan. Owing to his benefactions towards persons of birth and family, the country became inhabited by a large number of Musalmans of noble origin, and he conferred upon them numerous estates in the shape of freehold villages and tenements.

During the government of Suja-ud-din Mahammad Khan, Nadir Shah, King of Persia, invaded India and sacked Delhi and other cities. Most of the inhabitants of Delhi and the surrounding parts fled at that time into Bengal to seek the protection of Suja-ud-din Muhammad Khan. This ruler accorded liberal treatment to these refugees and conferred geat benefits upon them. This gave a new impetus to the influx of immigrants, as would appear ffom the following extract from *Tarikh-i-Mansoori* :--

"No sooner did any stranger come into his dominions than he used to get notice both of his arrival and whehter the newcomer was a person of good lineage and ability. After the arrival of such a person at Murshidabad, he used to wait for three days to see if the stranger possessed any interest with any of the officers of the Court; and if so, if anyone spoke of him, he used to send for him and promote his objects; otherwise on the fourth day he himslef, making mention of the stranger, remarked that perhaps none of the audience had familiarity or acquaintance with him, or else some one must have spoken about him. Even then, if anyone gave sufficient information about him, so much the better, or else he would himself send some one to procure information concerning him, and also to carry the message to him that, as he had chanced to come to his dominions, he might as well come to see him He then secretly procured information as to his manners and means; and after having become acquainted with all the necessary particulars regarding him, he questioned him regarding his intentions. If he thought that he purposed adhering to him and wanted employment, he received him into his service in a most cordial and gracious manner, and forthwith supplied him with moderate funds for his necessary expenses, intimating to him at the same time that in this country such a small sum suffices (to cover all one's necessary expenses); besides, God Almighty has the power to give yet more. It was his wonted practice that whenever he sent a present to any person, if the bearer accepted any reward or gratuity from the receiver, he took to task both the bearer and the receiver

for it. In fact he himself treated his servants with such a degree of liberality that hardly any of them felt any desire for reward. All those courtiers who were known to him by sight used to receive a tray full of dainties and delicacies from the hospitable kitchens of this generous lord, in such order that some received it daily, some on alternate days, and others bi-weekly. This hospitable practice never ceased so long as he lived. He used to keep by himself a note-book, the leaves of which were made of ivory, containing a memorandum of the names of such of his attendants and courtiers as were personally known to him. Every night before going to bed he used to look over these pages, and selecting some of the names thereform, put down against each, with his own pen, such a sum as was commensurate to the individual's condition, sums which were often large; and having issued orders to his revenue officers for the payment of each item of these sums out of the proceeds of the crown lands, apprised the gratuitants or their agents respecting the donation. If he (the receiver of the gift) did not divulge the fact, he rose higher in his regard and esteem; but whoever did the contrary lost his confidence on account of his untrustowrithy behaviour, and without showing any harshness towards him he used to efface the names of such dilinquents from the note-book in question and substituted other names in their places. He continued in this practice throughout his life."

Besides these foreign settlers who came to Bengal by land, as indicated in the foregoing pages, numerous people came to this country also by sea.

Hooghly was then the port of Bengal and an anchorage for ships. Most of the comers, from, and returners to, Arabia and other western countries embarked or disembarked at this port. The inhabitants of Bengal and the upper parts of Hindustan as far as Delhi embarked here when going on pilgrimages to Mecca and other places of sanctity. Moreover, people from Iran, Khorasan, Iraq, Arabia and Egypt, who chose to come to Hindustan or Bengal by sea, disembarked here. Thus in process of time Bengal became inhabited by large numbers of foreign Muslamans.

To illustrate these facts I mention here the circumstances of a few of those families who came by this route into Bengal, and proceeding from here to Delhi and other places rose to eminence and distinction.

(1) *The Royal House of Oudh.*—The founder of this dynasty, Mahomed Amin, styled Nawab Burhan-ul-Mulk Saadat Khan Bahadur, who belonged to one of the noblest families of Nishapore, came with his father from that place to Bengal and stayed here for some time. After the demise of his father whose tomb still exists in Azimabad (Patna), he proceeded to Delhi and there rose to eminence. The author of *Imad-us-Saadat* relates that Mirza Nasir had two sons by his wife, who was the daughter of Syyad Sams-ud-din, of Nishapore. One was named Mir Mahomed Bakar and the other Mir Mahomed Ameen. In the year 1118 A.H., Mirza Nasir with his son, Mir Mahomed Bakar, arrived at Bengal on board a ship, and fixed his residence in Azimabad, and used to receive a maintenance allowance from the Government of Shuja-ud-Dowalh Shuja-ud-din Mahomed Khan, Nazim of Bengal. About this time Mir Mahomed Bakar contracted matrimony, and had a son born to him. This boy afterwards received the title of Bashir Jang during the ascendancy of his

uncle Burhan-ul-Mulk, and was appointd to the Subadarship of Kashmir by the King of Delhi. In the year 1120 A.H., Mir Mahcmed Ameen, who had remained in the territory of Nishapore, came to Bengal with a view to see his venerable father and brother, and met them. Some time later, Mirza Nasir died at Azimabad. After the demise of the father both the brothers left Bengal and proceeded to Shahjahanabad, where gradually they attained to pre-eminent positions. Mir Mahomed Ameen received from Mahomed Shah Badshah the post of a Commander of seven thousand with the title of Burhan-ul-Mulk Saadat Khan, and was appointed to the Subadarship of Oudh.

(2) *The Family of Hakim Ulvi Khan, the Royal Physician.*--Hakhim Mir Mahomed Hadi, the venerable uncle of Nawab Ulvi Khan, came into Bengal by sea, and was introduced to the presence of Suja-ud-din Mahomed Khan, through the agency of the Foujdar (Commandant) of Hooghly and obtained a situation at the Court. Ulvi Khan had also come with his uncle and was then of a tender age and under his tuition. In course of time Hakim Mir Mahomed Hadi became famous for his learning and reputed for his skill in physics. As Mahomed Shah Badshah wanted an eminent physician and had learnt that the Nazim of Bengal had a skilful medical man about him, he wrote the Nazim to sent him to his Court. But as neither Mir Mahomed Hadi was agreeable to go to Delhi, nor was the Nazim, having regard to the good of his own health,willing to part with him, he therefore answered the King to the effect that Hakim MirMahomed Hadi owing to age and imfirmity was incapable of undertaking a journey to Delhi, but that he was sending the Hakim's nephew, who had studied medicines under his uncle and was equally proficient in the art. Nevertheless, in case of necessity, Mir Mahomed Hadi would go in person. Ulvi Khan went with the Nazim's petition to the King at Delhi, and the eminence to which he rose and the fame that he acquired there is more evident than the sun itself (*i.e.* too well known to need any mention). The rest of the family of these Hakims remained in Murshidabad and live there up to this day. Nawab Mujaffar Jang, the Naeb Nazim of Bengal, of whom an account is to be found in the various histories, belonged to this family.

(3) *The Armenian Settlers in Bengal.*--Ages ago the ancestors of these Armenians, flying from the persecution and violence of some one of the kings of Iran, had come from that country to Bengal by way of the sea and settled here, and their descendants have ever since continued to reside in in this country.

In a similar way persons belonging to various family stocks and branches have come from different realms and regions and domiciled here. As I have shown in the foregoing pages that Musalman immigrants from the metropolis of Delhi and other places largely stocked the population of Bengal and adopted this country as their own, it appears therefore necessary to take some notice of the political features of those countries from which Musalmans originally came to Doelhi.

All Central and Western Asia from Khorasan and Afghanistan to Bagdad, the seat of the Caliphate and Room, which were under Moslem domination, fell into tumult and convulsions owing to the irruption and invasion of Chinghiz Khan and his decendants. From the violence and tyranny of these invaders the life of every man, whether high or low, was in jeopardy. They effaced all trace of Musalmans from every country that fell under their sway and made indiscriminate slaughter of the Musalman inhabitants without any regard to sex or age. Consequently these people fled to other countries for safety ; and because at that time there was a powerful Musalman government in India, most of the refugees therefore fled into this realm. This fact has been related thus in the *Tabaquat-i-Nasiri* :-

"Notwithstanding that by the will of the Almighty and the decrees of destiny the turn of sovereignty passed unto Chinghiz Khan, the accursed, and his descendants, after the Kings of Iran and Turan, and that the whole of the land of Turan and the East fell under the sway of the Mughals and that the authority of the Mahommedan religion departed from those regions, which became the seat of Paganism, the kingdom of Hindustan, by the grace of Almighty God and the favour of fortune, under the shadow of the guardianship of the *Shamsi* race, and the shade of the protection of the Al-timishi Dynasty, became the focus of the people of Islam, and the orbit of the possessors of religion; and as from the extremity of the territories of Chin, Mawarannahar, Tukharistan, Zawul, Ghur, Kabul, Ghaznin, Iraq, Tabaristan, Iran, Khurasan the Dyar-i-Bakr and Mansil as far as the boundaries of Rum and Sham, fell into the hands of the infidel Mughals, and not a trace of the Mahommedan Maluks and Sultans of Islam remained in these countries; The Almighty's mercy be upon them, and may He long preserve the Nasiriah dynasty."

It is further written in the same work that after the events of the year 614, in Khorasan, owing to the invasion and irruption of Changhiz Khan Mughal, Jalal-ud-din Khwarazm Shah, being defeated and over-thrown by the infidel forces, in the year 616 came towards Hindustan.

The same author also narrates as follows:--

"From the very outset of his reign and the dawn of the morning of sovereignty in the congregating of eminent doctors of religion and law, venerable Syyads, Maliks, Ameers, Sadars and (other great men, the Sultan used yearly to expend about ten millions; and people from various parts of the world he gathered together at the Capital City of Delhi, which is the seat of the Government of Hindustan, and the centre of the circle of Islam, the sanctuary of the *Mandates* and inhibitions of the religion of Mahamet, the kernel of the Mahammadan religion, the marrow of the Ahmadi belief, and the tabernacle of the eastern parts of the universe; guard it O! God, from calamities and molestations. This city, through the number of the grants and unbounded munificence of that pious monarch became the retreat and resting place for the learned and virtuous and the excellent of the various parts of the world; and those who, by the mercy of God the Most High, escaped

* Translation of *Tabaquat-i-Nasiri*, by Major H. G. Raverty, pp. 869—888.

from the toils and the calamities, sustained by the provinces and cities of Ajam, and the misfortunes caused by the (irruption of the) infidel Mughals, made the capital the asylum of the universe—of that Sovereign their asylum, refuge, resting place and point of safety; and up to the present day, those same rules are observed and remain unchanged, and such may they ever continue.

Ferishta, writing on the same subject, relates as follows :—

"At that time, the royal palace was fitted up and adorned,in a style of kingly magnificence, with gold and silver (furniture and ornaments). Persons of dignified position, Syyads, ecclesiastic, illustrious Chiefs, and twenty-five Princes of Iraq, Khorasan and Mawarannahar, who had come to India owing to the disturbances and disorder caused by Chinghiz Khan and lived under his protection, and also many a Rai and Raja stood at a respectful distance from his throne with folded arms. It is related in the *Mulhiquat-i-Nasiri*, written by Shaikh Ainuddin of Bijapore, that this exaltation and good fortune alone were sufficient for (the gratification of) Sultan Ghias-ud-din Balban that those ex-rulers who had come to India in the reigns of the preceding monarchs and moreover fifteen Princes from Turkistan, Mawarannahar, Khorasan, Iraq Azarbaijan, Khwarezm, Room, and Sham, who having been ejected from their seats of power by the aggressions of Chinghis Khan, had arrived at Delhi during his own reign and been placed in positions of honor and affiuence, all stood with utmost joy and cordiality with folded arms before his throne except two princes who sat at the foot of the throne, as they were descended from the Abbaside Caliphs. Whenever any of the princes or illustrious personages of the age happened to come to India during his reign, he was wont to signify his joy and offer thanks to God, and he would assign to each of these a separate quarter of the city (Delhi), so that from their locations fifteen (additional) wards came into existence in Delhi, *viz.* (1), the Abbaside quarter (2), Sanjari quarter (3), Khwarizmi quarter (4), Delemi quarter (5) Ulvi quarter (6), Atabaki quarter (7), the Ghori quarter (8), Chinghizi quarter (9), Roomi quarter (10), Sunkari quarter (11), Yamani quarter (12), Mosali quarter (13), Samarkandi quarter (14), Kashghari quarter, and (15) Khatai quarter. Because scions of illustrious families and most distinguished personages of the age representing the sword and the pen, and masters of music and art, such as had no match in the four quarters of the world, were assembled at his Court, it therefore was said to possess a decided superiority over that of (Sultan) Mahamood or (Sultan) Sanjar. It is said that all persons of learning and erudition and the doctors of religion assembled at the residence of his eldest son, who was commonly called Khani-Shahid; while the musicians, ministers to pleasure and story-tellers, wits' jesters and bufoons gathered at the assembly of his other son named Boghra Khan and formed royal pleasure parties."

In the second chapter of the same history is narrated as follows:--

"During the reign of Sultan Mahomed Tughlak, from its commencement to its termination, great and eminent men, artists and those whose fortunes had been wrecked, came to Hindustan, from Iraq, Khorasan, Mawarannahar, Turkistan and Arabia, in the hopes of receiving kind and benevolent treatment from him, and in fact obtained greater favours than their most sanguine expectations led them to look for."

It will be manifest from the citations made successively in the preceding pages, from various historical works, that owing to the disruption of the Kingdoms of Arabia, Iran, Turkistan and Khorasan, the high and low people of those realms came mostly to India; and more especially the chief persons of those countries during those troublous and disastrous times, had to fly to India for the safety of their lives and to avoid dishonour from their enemies. Most of such refugees flocked to Delhi and placed themselves under the protection of successive monarchs. It has also been shown that during the reigns of the Ghori, Khilji, Tughlak, Syyad, Lodi and Mughal emperors, people continued to come into Bengal from Delhi and other parts of India, and it is the unanimous verdict of historians that during the reign of Sultan Kykobad, owing to the revolution of Govern-

ment, and in the reign of Sultan Mahomed Tughlak, on account of his atrocities and the frequent recurrence of famines, the whole population of Delhi, as it were, came to Bengal. The kings and rulers of Bengal ever treated these comers with consideration, and provided for each in a manner suitable to his condition, either by enrolling him in the State service or by granting him rent-free lands. In this way, when the immigrants gradually swelled into large numbers, they then dispersed over the whole face of the country and fixed their residences and retreats in every part of it. The members of these foreigners received daily accessions from births; and from the congregations of their families, towns, villages and hamlets rose into existence.

The kingdom of Gaur in Bengal had long continued very powerful and prosperous, so much so that it had no rival in wealth and affluence. The city of Gaur was extensive and populous. It teemed with noble and high families and persons noted for learning, erudition and genius. A large standing army was also located there. All these various classes of people were Musalmans of foreign origin. The city, moreover, contained various other classes of Musalmans, such as professional men, tradesmen, artizans, &c, &c. In short, while there was a Musalman Government there were all the necessary appenages thereto, as also men in adequate numbers and of sufficient ability to man and conduct the machinery of Government. It would be simply preposterous to think that the kings were the only Musalmans in the contry, and that they had no Musalman courtiers or officers; or even if they had, that they were only the new Musalman converts of this country.*

The former rulers of Bengal, during their successive reigns, directed their best endeavours to induce men belonging to their own race and creed to come from all parts of the world and settle in their dominions, with a view to increase and strengthen their own power and position; and with these men they peopled towns, villages and hamlets. Moreover, the civil and military officers of foreign origin who were appointed by these rulers, each had Musalman relations and followers of his own. This state of things prevailed throughout the very long period that the kingdom of

* Raja Kanis.—Immediately after the above mentioned event, the zemindar, having assumed the title of Raja, advanced to Pandua, where he was greeted by the Hindoos as the restorer of their religion and sovereign of Bengal; but after being seated on the throne, he found that the Mahommedans in his dominions were so numerous, and so much superior in bravery to his natural subjects, that he judged it requisite to treat them with mildness and affability: he therefore allowed many of the Afghan chiefs to retain their estates,and granted pension to the learned and devout of that religion. By these means he enjoyed a quiet and peaceable reign of seven years, and died in the year 794,A.D., 1392."—*History of Bengal*, by C. Stewart, p.60.

Gaur subsisted; but on the dissolution and disruption of this kindgom at the establishment of the Mughal dominion, Gaur became involved in the general ruin; and its population was dispersed in all directions, and each individual established himself in those villages and rural parts where he could get a foothold, and there made some shift to maintain himself. Those who owned freehold tenements or the like, remained content with such possessions and passed their lives in retirement and tranquillity, while those of the military profession who were destitute of means took to agriculture to gain their subsistence.

The above particulars have reference to those Musalmans who came to Bengal previous to the country coming under the sway of the House of Timur. After the supremacy of the Mughals was established, their own people began to come to Bengal. Nimbers of these people, of all descriptions and orders, came from time to time, into this country, in various ways and established themselves in all the parts, in a manner suitable to their individual conditions. During the reigns of these monarchs most of the civil and military functionaries were of foreign origin, and the practice that previously obtained, of encouraging the settlement of the foreign Musalmans of noble and gentle birth, in this country, was also followed by the Mughal emperors, *i.e.* they, too, caused the learned and the gentry to settle in various parts of the country by granting them *madadma-ash* and *jagirs* and treating them with regard and consideration.* They, moreover, observed benignity and generosity in dealing with the

* *Akbarnamah*, Vol. II, tells of the Afghan invasions that were repeatedly made on the eastern countries (Bengal). When Solaman Shah, the then ruler of Bengali, Behar and Orissa, died and was succeeded by Daood Shah, Akbar the Great, Mogul Emperor, directed Monaim Khan, Khan Khanan, to invade Bengal in the 17th year after His Majesty's accession to the throne. In the 19th year Khan Khanan invaded Bengal, and the defeated King Daood Khan with his followers fled from Tanda (the capital of Bengal near Gorh) towards the south-east and north of Bengal (Hoogly, Dacca and Denajpore), Daood himself flying to Satgaun or Hoogly. In the 21st year Daood Shah was captured by Khan Jahan the then Subadar of Bengal, and put to death. The people tendered their submission to the Imperial Government of the Moguls, and thus peace and prosperity was established throughout the country—a country which was designated as the hot-bed of war from time immemorial on account of the confusion and disturbance which so violently agitated it.

In the 22nd year, the deceased King's mother with all her dependants made an appeal to the Emperor for protection and safety, and proposed to be permitted to appear personally before His Majesty when on tour in the neighbourhood of Tanda. Khan Jahan accepted her prayers and returned to his own station. In the 23rd year, Khan Jahan reported to His Majesty that the people of Bengal had agreed to obey the Imperial power; and finding therein they way to their prosperity and welfare, they gladly placed themselves under His Majesty's benignant protection and care; and Daood's mother with all her adherents and Mahmud Khan and many other insurgent Afghans came under the royal protection.

In the 28th year of His Majesty's reign (Vol. II, *Akbarnamah*) it is mentioned that when Bengal was invaded for the third time, wise and experienced men were employed to win the hearts of the people with sweet and attractive speeches, with persuasive eloquence and with hopeful assurances. By means of words which acted like enchantment, they succeeded in bringing the people to submit to the Emperor. Khaladin Khan first swore fealty to the imperial authority, and afterwards Mirza Beg, Jahazi Khan and many others

Musalmans of the previous Governments, and confirmed most of them in those grants-in-lands and stipends which they formerly enjoyed. The Mughal Emperors and Governors, like the former rulers of Bengal, introduced into the country people of their own nation and creed and caused them to be domiciled and settled all over it, and thereby imparted security and stability to their rule.*

It was not the custom with the Musalman comers to return to their native lands after a sojourn in this country ; but, on the contrary, it was invariably their practice to permanently settle in any part of the country where they found a place which promised comfort and safety and where they could obtain means of livelihood.

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proffered, through proxy, to submit to the Imperial Government. It was agreed that they would give up fighting and go to their homes, and then after some time they should appear before the Darbar to make good their promise by doing good services. Miza Beg, Khaladin Khan,Wazir Jamil and others persented themselves for the promised service as a proof of their declared submission. In the 29th year, when Shahbaz Khan was appointed Subadar of Bengal and Sadik Khan went from Bengal to the Emperor, Wazir Jamil, Khaladin Khan, Furrokh and others who had sworn allegiance, but on account of their previous misconduct had always lived in fear, accompanied Sadik Khan in the hope to obtain forgiveness through his intercession from His Majesty. As soon as the news reached His Majesty, Mahandas was sent to direct Sadik Khan to return to Bengal and join Wazir Khan then fighting with Katloo Khan in Orrisa; and to bring the refugees to the Court with hopes of imperial forgiveness. He met with Sadik Khan at Tanda, and sent him forthwith to join Wazir Khan as desired by His Majesty. Sadik sent his son Zahed to accompany the refugees to the Court and to afford consolation to them. In due time they reached the capital, and obtaining admission into the imperial presence, received His Majesty's forgiveness and were honoured with various gifts. It is put down again in the accounts of the same year (Vol. II, *Akbarnamah*) that Masoom Khan, one of the powerful grandees of Bengal, was advised to submit, and thereupon did so. Isa Khan, Zemindar of Sonargram, sent his men to Sadik Khan with hopes to obtain the royal forgiveness, and it was settled that Masoom Khan should be sent to Hejaz, and he himself should be a faithful servant to His Majesty and send one of his near relatives to the Court as a hostage, together with some choice presents and should return whatever he had wrung from the royal army during the choice 'resents and should return whatever he had wrung from the ryoual army during the battle. His Majesty accepted the aforesaid terms, and, accordingly, Isa Khan despatched to the capital the elephants, the cannons and the treasures which he had captured. Though he did not send Masoom Khan to Hejaz he put a check upon his turbulent and mischievous tendencies. In the 30th year Shah Baz Khan, Subadar of Bengal, by menas of loving and endearing words and assurances, won the hearts of the people and obtained their obedience, and thus he was very soon able to bring the refractory to obedience and submission, and thus peace and prosperity smiled in the land, and disorders and disturbances entirely left it.

Refering to the events that happened in the 37th year, the same authority states that the people of the eastern part of the country became thoroughly faithful and submissive and the province of Orrisa was brought under subjection. The zemindars appealed for protection and safety, which was afforded to them, and the whole country made explicit submission. The sons of Katloo Khan, Khaja Sooleman, Delawar Khan, Jelal Khan, Bahadur Ghor, Alif Khan, Abdul Gaffoor, Malaik Hybat, Malaik Daood, Malaik Sekandar Habib Khan, Darya Khan, Shujadil and Mewa Khan, chieftains of Bengal, obtained His Majesty's protection.

* "The system of military service was perfectly congenial to the wishes of the Mughals; and every chief, in succession, established himself and his dependant in the district, to which he had been first appointed; and the late governor, Khan Jahan, being only solicitious about extirpating the Afghans, allowed them to continue in undisturbed possession."—*History oj Bengal*, by C. Stewart, p.107."

There are no evidences on record which disprove the above facts and assertions, or which show that the natives of this country, either from compulsion or free will, were converted to Islam, in any appreciable number at a time, or that the descendants of the kings of Gaur or that those Musalmans whose arrival in this country is recorded in history or the descendants of such, ever quitted Bengal.

In giving an account of the Musalmans of Murshidabad, Sir W.W. Hunter, in his *Statistical Account of Murshidabad*, p.60, makes an assumption in the following words: "It is said that the great Mahommedan families returned to Delhi or to Persia, when Bengal became subject to the English." Sir W. W. Hunter's remark on this point is as erroneous as untenable. It is an obvious fact that just before the conquest of Bengal by the English the Government of the land being in a state of disorganization, a strong and efficient government was most desirable. Therefore, when Bengal came under the British rule, which restored tranquillity to the country and gave protection to its people, the great Mahommedan families could hardly be so discontented as to retire to Delhi or to Persia; while the spirit of toleration which is a characteristic of the English nation, not only afforded them liberty of faith and religion, but allowed them to be governed by their own laws and principles. The service of State, which causes its subjects to rise in position and wealth, attracted the great Mahommedan families to remain in Bengal, as, after the English became the rulers of the country, the Mahommedans, up to a recent time, used to hold posts of honor and trust and enjoyed a great share in the administration of the country. But the introduction of the English language into the country, and the prejudice of the Musalmans, which they blindly formed against that language, and lastly the new system of distributing Government appointments, deprived them of their former position and posts, and ultimately brought them to their present depth of poverty and oblivion. One who has minutely studied the history of the Musalmans of Bengal, will see that the great Mahommedan families who came to Murshidabad from the time of Murshid Kuli Khan, the Nawab Nazim of Bengal, are still largely to be found in the towns of Murshidabad, Patna, Purnea, Dacca, Hoogly, &c., or in the villages of these districts; and that the *Sanads*, which were conferred upon them by the ancient rulers of the country, are still preserved and the landed property (though split into very small pieces) which they received as grants from those rulers, is, up to this day, in the possession of their descendants. It will thus appear that the supposition of Sir W.W. Hunter with regard to the Musalmans of Bengal

is quite baseless and unreliable. Such being the case it can safely, and withiout any fear of contradiction, be asserted that the ancestors of the present Musalmans of this country were certainly those Musalmans who came here from foreign parts during the rule of the former sovereigns, and that the present generation of Musalmans are the offspring of that dominant race who remained masters of the land for 562 years. Admitting, for the sake of argument, that the Musalmans of the present time are other than the descendants of those foreign Musalman rulers and settlers, who can then the progeny be of those foreign Musalmans and where have they gone to? Considering that the descendants of only five Brahmins and five Sudras who (as is said) orginally came to Bengal from Kanauj could have multiplied to such an enormous extent, that they are to be found everywhere in the country, what impossibility is there in supposing that the descendants of the innumerable and countless Musalmans who came to this country, during long ages, have become more numerous than they.

Having brought the argument to this advanced stage, we now trust that the reader will, with little deliberation, be able to perceive how far it could be just and right for any person to argue that "the ancestors of the Musalmans of Bengal were the low caste Hindus of this country who had embraced Islam."

The erroneous opinions expressed in this connection by Sir W. Hunter and other writers of note have been derived from the wrong and groundless theories promulgated by Mr. H. Beverley in the following statement in his Census Report of Bengal for 1872, (p. 1432, para. 348) :-

"But probably the real explanation of the immense preponderance of the Muslaman religious element in this portion of the delta is to be found in the conversion to Islam of the numerous low castes which occupied it. The Mahommedans were ever ready to make conquests with the Koran as with the sword. Under Sultan Jalal-ud-din, for instance, it is said that the Hindus were persecuted almost to extermination. The exclusive caste system of Hinduism, again, naturally encouraged the conversion of the lower orders from a religion under which they were no better than despised outcastes, to one which recognized all men as equals. It is not clear, indeed, that this conversion of the lower castes was more general in the part of the country of which we are treating than elsewhere, though of course the greater number of Mahommedans located between Gaur and Ghoraghat adds probability to the supposition. History is unfortunately silent on this subject of conversion. But tha conversion was very largely carried on in Bengal, appears not only probable, but is the only explanation of the large numbers of Mahommedans found here in the present day who occupy the same social position as their Hindu neighbours."

Para. 352.—"In Bengal, however, it was not so. There the Musulman invasion found Hinduism resting on weak and uncertain foundations, with but a feeble hold over the minds and affections of the great bulk of the inhabitants. Tfhe Aryan element, so far from displacing the indigenous children of the soil, was only able to hold its own by frequent importations of fresh blood from Upper India. The Hindu religion itself was of a baser and more degraded type, being driven to assimilate and adopt the barbarous practices and superstitions of the aborigines which it sought to embrace within its folds. At the same time these huge masses found themselves occupying the position of serfs to a superior race

who had overcome them by brute physical force, and in whose social system no place could be found for them. They were merely the hewers of wood and drawers of water for a set of masters in whose eyes they were unclean beasts and altogether abominable. Hemmed in by the sea, it was no longer open to them to retire further before the face of their pursuers, even had the Aryans ever entered Bengal in sufficient force to drive them to such an extreme measure. But when, in their turn, the Musalman conquerors of Hindustan invaded the lower delta with the sword and Koran, it may well be conceived that they were not altogether unwelcome. At any rate, they brought with them a religion and social system under which, instead of being a despised and outcaste race, the semi-amphibious aborigines of Bengal might occupy a rival, if not an equal, position to that of their late masters. We can imagine that very little persecution was required to change the faith of these miserable helots of Bengal. Persecution has rarely, if ever, succeeded of its own innate force to establish any religion. The times and circumstances of the country must demand the revolution before it can be brought about by persecution alone. In Behar it was unsuccessful because Hinduism was strong enough to repel it. In Bengal Hinduism succumbed, and the great mass of the people embraced the faith of Mahammad simply to escape from their ignoble position under the Hindu system."

Para.353.—"If further proof were wanted of the position that the Musalmans of the Bengal delta owe their origin to conversion rather than to the introduction of foreign blood, it seems to be afforded in the close resemblance between them and their fellow-countrymen who still form the low castes of Hindus. That both are originally of the same race seems sufficiently clear, not merely from their possessing identically the same physique, but from the similarity of the manners and customs which characterise them."

Para. 354.—"But place a Chandal or a Rajbunsee and a Bengali Musalman together, and were it not for some peculiarity of dress or the mode of cutting the hair, it would be difficult to distinguish the one from the other. The probability is they are one and the same race, and only within the last few centuries have they ceased to profess the same religion.

We are surprised at the hypothesis of Mr. Beverley, which are, as he himself professes, quite unsupported by historical evidences. It is admitted on all hands that history is the only authentic record whereby we may become acquainted with past events and occurrences of the world, and both greater and lesser events and significant and insignificant incidents are particularised therein. Wherefore, in the absence of all proof from the history of any nation whatever, in regard to the theories of Mr. Beverley, we are quite unable to accept their accuracy. If it be maintained, for the sake of controversy, that the events of those times are not fully and comprehensively recorded in history, or that the mention of circumstances like these have been omitted either willfuly or by oversight or from some other cause, our answer to this would be that there is no portion of the Musalman period of which the events are not fully and faithfully chronicled in their histories. When events far less important than those referred to by Mr. Beverley, such as the particulars of the reign of Sultan Mahmood, are fully narrated in the histories, what then could prevent the historians from recording such a comparatively noteworthy circumstance as the conversion of the Hindus of Bengal under the compulsion of their Musalman conquerors ?

Had the facts asserted by Mr. Beverley been true, and the mention of them been omitted in the former histories, from any cause whatever, they would have surely been taken some notice of in those written at the

command of the Emperor Akbar, such as the *Tabaquat-i-Akbari* and the like, in which the accounts of the reigns of all the former sovereigns of Bengal are chronicled in minute detail. Akbar is universally considered to be a monarch free from all religious prejudice. Nevertheless, neither the historical works written under the direction of this emperor nor the annals of any other nation lend any support to the theories advanced by Mr. Beverley. He has stated that when the Musalmans invaded Lower Bengal with the sword and the Koran the lower orders of Hindus in this country were the objects of despise and contempt by the higher classes ; that they were in a very degraded condition ; that they had no position in society and that they "cut wood and drew water" for their masters ; and for these reasons were easily converted to Islam by the force of the sword and the *Koran.* But this statement is open to objection ; since if the lower orders of the Hindus were compelled to embrace Islam, how was it possible ior the higher classes, who held a position of rivalry with the Musalmans, to have escaped from the rigours of compulsory proselytism and to have adhered to their own creed in this country ? Had the Muslaman conquerors, holding the *Koran* in one hand and the sword in the other, forced the native people to submit to the yoke of Islam, then, as sure as the night follows the day, they would have converted to their own creed the higher orders of the Hindus equally with the lower classes.

I cite below the opinions of other Christain writers, which belie the assertions of Mr. Beverley as imputing wholesale proselytizing principles to the Musalman conquerors of Bengal, and also bring to light his lamentable errors and even the unfairness involved in such assertions. Thus the reader will perceive that it was commonly the practice with the Muslaman conquerors everywhere to leave the people of any country they conquered to their own creed and custom, and not to interfere with their modes of life. The celebrated author, Mr. Godfrey Higgins, who is a great authority on the subject, writes as follows :—

> "In the countries conquered by the Caliphs, the peaceable inhabitants, whether Greeks, Persians, Sabeans, or Hindoos, were not put to the sword as the Christians have represented; but after the conquest was terminated, were left in the peaceable possession of their properties and religion."

John Davenport has written, in his work entitled *Apology for Mahomed and the Koran,* that "the Musalman conquerors of India, after committing some acts hostile to the free exercise of other religions, left alone the temples of that civilized and prosperous country."

Another writer, in an article headed, "Islam as a Political System," which appearod in the Journal *East and West,* has stated :—

"Islam has never interfered with the dogmas of any faith, never persecuted, never established an Inquisition, never aimed at proselytism. It offered its religion, but never enforced it."

"A spirit the very reverse of this (intolerance)," remarks the same author, "is evinced in every page of the history of Islam, in every country to which it has extended; so that in Palestine a Christian poet (Lamartine) has exclaimed twelve centuries after the events to which we are referring, 'The Mahometans are the only tolerant people on the face of the earth;' and an English traveller (Slade) reproaches them with being too tolerant."

Let the reader remark well that all these impartial opinions of Christian judges are contradictory to the hollow assertions of Mr. Beverley.

It now remains to examine the question as to the lowcaste Hindus of this country turning Musalmans from their having no place in respectable Hindu society, and owing to there being a general equality of position and absence of gradations among the Musalman community.

Every rational mind can well conceive that there is no earthly temptation, however strong, that can seduce one from the religion of his father and induce him to embrace any other religion. However mean and low a person's condition in life may be, he holds his faith dearer than all worldly lucre. If Mr. Beverley's conjectures were right, all the Hindus, high caste and low, would have equally forsaken their religion and embraced Islam, during the Musalman supremacy, in order to secure worldly advantages ; and thus of the followers of the Hindu faith who are countless in this country at the present day, scarcely any could be found; or if some of them would have nevertheless remained in some remote and isolated part of the country, these remnants would surely have yielded to the evangelic persuasions of the missionaries, and would have been tempted to embrace Christianity for the sake of finding education and training in civilization and also the means of livelihood by the help of those missionaries, and furthermore to secure that equality of position which, from a religious point of view, is deemed to exist just as much among the Christian people as among the followers of Islam.

Mr. Beverley's opinion, that even a low-caste Hindu, on his conversion to Islam, attains to a position of equality with the generality of Musalmans, simply betrays his ignorance of the customs of the Musalmans. From a religious point of view, of course, all Musalmans stand on a footing of equality. But according to usage and customs the social position and the family rank of a man do not become altered by the change of religion. In fact the social position of a Musalman convert exactly corresponds to the station he held previous to his conversion, and he can associate with only such Musalmans as belong to the same station as he himself ; a low-caste person on his embracing Islam, is not allowed to hold familiar intercourse or claim equality with high-born Musalmans, nor can a Hindu of

superior caste, upon his conversion to Islam, marrry into a respectable Musalman family. Rigid and scrupulous regard has ever been paid by the Musalmans to social position and family dignity.

Regarding the features and physique, habits and characteristics of the the Bengal Musalmans, Mr. Beverley has written that if one of these Musalmans be contrasted with a Chandala or Rajbansi, no difference can be perceived between them except in their dress and the cut of their hair. We shall show, in a subsequent chapter treating of the ethnological features and characteristics of the Musalmans, how far this statement is correct, but here we point out that the countenance and appearance of the Musalmans of Bengal remarkably differs from that of the Hindus of this country and is generally better than theirs.

Europeans have travelled through Arabia and Ajam under disguise, and have been taken by the natives of those countries either for Arabs or Ajams. For instance, in the accounts of the travels of the celebrated traveller, Sir Richard Burton, which were published, together with his portarit in Arabic costume, in the *Illustrated London News* of November 1st, 1890, it is related that he travelled through Africa and Arabia under the assumed name of Shaik Abdullah. He had so successfully imitated the Arabic tongue and tone, and so effectually adapted his manners and habits, mien and air to those of the Arabs, that none of them suspected him of being an alien. Mr. Henry Palmer, Arabic Professor of Cambridge University, stated that when he travelled in Arabia in Musalman guise, no one ever detected him. Very recently an Englishman went in disguise into Afghanistan and performed for five years the fuuctions of Imam in the Cathedral Mosque of Herat ; but no one could, during this long time, detect that he was a Christian and not a Musalman.

Thus when by a little imitation and temporary assumption of disguise, differences and distinctions can be so fully obliterated, it is no wonder then, if Mr. Beverley has failed to perceive any difference between the Hindus and Musalmans of this country whose families have lived in Bengal for centuries, and whose food, habits, costume and dialect have undergone a material change.

Without having recourse to historical evidence and to the indications afforded by features and habits, mere conjecture is sufficient to lead us to the conclusion that it is owing to the country remaining under Musalman sway ror nearly six hundred years that Musalmans are now to be found here in such overwhelming numbers. Likewise it would be more consistent with reason to think that the comparatively larger numbers of Musalmans that

inhabit the district of Maldah, within which lie the ruins of Gaur and the adjacent districts, are the descendants of the population of that old Musalman capital. The Musalman capital in Bengal was first at Gaur. The capital was subsequently removed to Rajmahal. From Rajmahal it was removed to Dacca, and from Dacca to Moorshidabad. A vast number of Musalmans will be found in all these districts and the surrounding ones. It also appears from this that probably all these Musalmans, or at least the major portion of them, are the descendants of the ruling races who successively governed these countries.*

* "During the Mahommedan rule Ghor, Tanda, Rajmahal, Dacca and Murshidabad were respectively the capitals of Bengal, and this accounts for a larger number of Musalman population of these places as they settled in large numbers in the neighbourhood of their capitals,—Sarkar Ghoraghat, which now forms the districts of Bogra, Denajpore and Rungpore and its vicinity, Julpaigoory, etc.; and Sarkar Satgaon, comprising 24-Parganas, Nadia and Hoogly; Sarkar Fatehabad and Sarkar Bagla, which includes Jessore, Faridpur, Backergunge and Dacca; and Sarkar Sonargawn, now called Tipperah and Nawakhali[1] abound with Mahommedan population, the cause of which *Akbarnamah* itself refers to the migration of a very large number of Mahommedans to the above-mentioned places.

Akbarnamah, Vol. II, relates that when Monem Khan, Khan Khanan, conquered Bengal in the 19th year of His Majesty's reign, according to His Majesty's order, Daod Shah, King of Bengal, with his followers fled to Satgaun, and the chiefs and the grandees of Bengal with their adherents fled to Sonargram, Ghoraghat and Fatehabad. Thus each party left the capital and fled in different directions (for safety). Khan Khanan, conjointly with Raja Todarmal, took possession of Tanda, the then capital of Bengal, and began to administer the country and sent the victorious army away into the neighbourhood in different directions all over Bengal. Mahommed Kooli Khan and others were sent to Satgan, Majno Khan and othrs to Ghoraghat, to suppress the insurerection and disturbances that were raging there, and Morad Khan and others to Fatehabad and Bogla to establish peace and order there; and Itemad Khan with others was appointed to subdue Sonargaun and to suppress the disturbances and disorders that might be prevailing there. This war between the Imperial army and the armies of the Chiefs of Bengal continued for a few years. At last, however, the people of Bengal sought for protection and swore allegiance. Their prayers were granted and protection was given to them. It was ordered that they should establish themselves where they were and that *jagirs* for their maintenance should be settled on them. On account of the residence of these protected chiefs, the districts of Bogra, Pabna-Denajpore, Jalpaigoory, Rangpore, Bakergunge, Maimansingh, Dacca, Tipperah, Noakakali, Chatgaon, Twenty-four Parganas, Hoogly, Nadia, Farridpore and Jessore abound with a Mahommedan population. The reason why Maldah and its adjacent (countries), Rajshahi, Purnea, Rajmahal, and their neighbouring places and Murshidabad teem with a Mahommedan population is this: that these places formed respectively the capitals of the Mahommedan kings and Nazims of Bengal. It appears from the verdict and testimony of history that the Mahommedans of Assam are not the descendants of the native converts of the place. Although they resemble the native Assamese to a considerable extent in appearance, language, manners and customs, they are not the original inhabitants of Assam. (See *History of Assam*, written by a follower of Mir Jumla, Subadar of Bengal, when the latter invaded and conquered Assam under the Imperial order from Aurangzeb). It is stated in page 34 of the said History that Hussain Shah, King of Bengal, marched towards Assam with twenty thousand horse and foot and innumerable boats. The King of Assam left his dominion and fled towards the mountainous regions of the land. Hussain Shah left his son with most of his army to rule over the country. When the rainy season advanced and the ways of communication were overflooded and stopped, the Raja descended from the mountains, and, in collusion with his people who had sworn allegiance to the victorious party, imprisoned the Prince with his chiefs and followers. The present Mahommedans of Assam, it is alleged, belong to the descendants of these capitives from

[1] Dr. Blochmann's contribution to the *History of Bengal*.

We cannot say whether Mr. Beverley has any ulterior object in exposing the Musalmans to contempt and ridicule by publishing such opinions and lamentable conjecture and imaginary suspicions as he has done ; but what we believe is that finding the Musalmans in overwhelming numbers in Bengal, and being ignorant of the actual cause of this increase in their numbers, he has advanced whatever theories he pleased to account for it.

We lament that during the *regime* of the most just and popular Government of Britain, a Government which has not its equal in the universe, the feelings of such vast multitudes of its loyal Musalman subjects should be allowed to be hurt by their being unjustly held up to ridicule before the whole world, and moreover, that such whimsical and defamatory statements which scandalize these Musalmans and injure their feelings should be placed on public record to put them to shame and make them contemptible in the eyes of the world.

We humbly but most earnestly implore the paternal Government to repair the wrong done to us Musalman subjects through the public writings of Mr. Beverley ; and solicit that the question at issue, *viz.*, that of our origin and ancestry be thoroughly inquired into with the help of the light afforded by history and that the results of such investigation may be placed on record.

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among Hussain Shah's armies. The author adds that it is through intermarriages between these captives and the Assamese that their children adopted the manners and customs of the natives, and are Mahommedan only in name. They like to befriend the natives more than the Mahommedans,and are more inclined to the Assamese than to the followers of Islam. And the Mahommedans who migrated and settled in Assam were allowed to say their *namaz* (prayers) and perform their *roza* (fast) but not to cry their sacred *azan* nor to chant the Holy Koran.

CHAPTER II

TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHIEF MUSALMAN FAMILIES IN BENGAL

ANOTHER proof of the existence of noble and high Musalman families in Bengal is that during the supremacy of the Ghori, Khilji, Mughal and other Musalman dynasties in India, the practice was that high and responsible officers and persons of distinction were granted *Jagirs*, *Al-tamgha*, *Aima* and *Madadi-ma'ash* by the State, in lieu of the payment of their salaries and stipends in cash. As a rule, *Jagirs* and *Al-tamgha* used to be granted to civil and military officers, and *Aimas* and *Madadi-ma'ash* to learned men, spiritual leaders, and persons of noble descent. *Jagirs* were granted nominally for life, but as most of the State appointments were conferred on the heirs of the late incumbents, consequently the *Jagirs* became hereditary in the family. *Aimas* and *Madadi-ma'ash* were granted in perpetuity chiefly to persons of noble birth and to holy men. Besides these grants, rent-free tenements used to be assigned by Government for the maintenance of holy shrines, mosques, and other religious establishments.

It should be here noted that in those times much circumspection was exercised and strictness observed in regard to land being granted free of of rent ; as from very early ages it has been the prerogative of royalty to possess certain proprietary rights in the lands within the kingdom, and the former sovereigns depended for their personal expenses as well as for those of the administration exclusively upon the revenues dervied from these lands. For this reason, such grants of land as deprived the Crown of its proprietary rights were never made except under actual and special requirements ; and consequently these grants were made by Government only in cases of absolute necessity to persons of great distinction, of admitted holiness and for the maintenance of shrines. The rules and practices related in the *Ain-i-Akbari* regarding *Sayurghals* are given below in a condensed form.

The kind-hearted Emperor (Akbar), by the wisdom given to him by God, reserved the grants of subsistence allowances and *Madadi-ma'ash* for four kinds of men, *viz.* :—

"(1) Those persons who have devoted themselves to the service of God and have withdrawn from all wordly concerns, and are engaged, day and night, in the search after true knowledge.

"(2) Those men of pious resignation who, overcoming vicious tendencies of human nature, have turned their faces from society.

"(3) Men who are destitute of means and incapable of making shift for themselves.

"(4) Men of respectability and good birth who, having improvidently and imprudently learnt no profession, are unable to provide for themselves."

In these two forms, millions have already been given away by the Imperial Government.

The *Sayurghals* of the Afghans were separated from the *Khalasa* or Crown lands, and orders were issued to the effect that all those who possessed five hundred bighas or more should relinquish their hold upon those in person.

Another order was passed that the excess of all lands beyond one hundred bigahs, if left unspecified in the *Farmans*, should be reduced to its two-fifths and the difference of three-fifths should be resumed and converted to Crown land, the Eranian and Tooranian widows alone being exempted from the operation of this regulation.

It was further ruled that such of the *Jagir* holders as might be found to occupy lands other than those constituting their *Jagirs*, may each of them be granted out of these new lands such a portion as to be equivalent to three-fourths of his relinquished *Jagir*.

During the ministry of Azd-ud-Dawlah, it was ordained that if a *Sayurghal* was held by more than one person and had not been divided and partitioned according to the terms of the *Farman*, the *Sadar* should, of his own motion, in the event of the death of any of the partners, proceed to make a proper division of the *Sayurghal*, and keep the share of the deceased partner annexed to the Crown land until the appearance of rightful heirs. The *Sadar* was, moreover, vested with the power to grant releases for holdings up to fifteen bighas.

Again, when it transpired that holders of one hundred bighas or less were guilty of dishonesty, orders were given for the *Sadar* to produce these grantees in person before the royal presence. Further orders were afterwards passed that the *Sadar* should, with the concurrence of Abul Fazl, either increase or retrench these grants.

The general rule was that *Sayurghals* should consist of one-half of tilled and the other half of cultivable lands, but if otherwise, one-fuorth of the whole might be retrenched and a cash allowance made in lieu of the remainder. The rate of revenue per bigha varies in the different parts but is never less than a rupee.*

The following statement will show the varieties and descriptions of rent-free tenures, held by the gentry and nobility, in most of the districts of Bengal, as originally under such rules and restrictions as have been mentioned above.

* Note on the Cadrs of Akbar's reign.

DESCRIPTION OF LAKHIRAJ TENURES

Varieties of Lakhiraj Tenures	Particulars of Holders.	Nature of the Tenures.
Jagir ..	Musalmans and Hindus.	Used to be granted for the life term of the holder for bearing any office or as remuneration for service.
Al-tamgha ..	Ditto ..	Granted in perpetuiy.
Madadi-ma'ash ..	Musalmans ..	Granted exclusively to spiritual guides, Syyads and high-born Musalmans.
Aima ..	Ditto ..	For religious leaders, spiritual guides and Syyads.
Maskan ..	Musalmans ..	For the erection of habitations, &c.
Nazoorat ..	Ditto ..	Granted to spiritual guides, Syyads and venerable holymen.
Khankah ..	Ditto ..	For the erection of Khankah.
Fakiran ..	Ditto ..	For mendicants.
Nazri Dargah ..	Ditto. ..	For the maintenance of a shrine.
Nazri-Imamain or Taziadari	Ditto. ..	For the celebration of the Moharram.
Zamin-i-Masjid ..	Ditto. ..	For the current expenses of a mosque.
Nazri Hazrat ..	Ditto. ..	For the performance of certain oblations.
Kharchi Mosafiran ..	Ditto. ..	For hospitality to wayfarers.
Marummati Masjid, &c. ..	Ditto. ..	For the maintenance of a mosque & c.
Ma-A'fi ..	Ditto. ..	For the subsistence of nobly-born Musalmans.
Piran ..	Ditto. ..	For spiritual guides and learned men, &c.
Khyrat or Khyrati ..	Ditto. ..	For Musalmans in destitute circumstances.
Kharij Jama ..	Hindus and Musalmans. ..	This tenure pertains both to Hin dus and Musalmans.
Minhai ..	Ditto ..	Ditto.
Brahmatter ..	Hindus ..	Specially for Brahmans.
Mehtran ..	Ditto. ..	For Hindus other than Brahmans.
Maleck and Maleakana ..	Musalmans and Hindus.	Pertains both to Hindus and Musalmans.
Debatter ..	Ditto. ..	For the maintenance of Hindu shrines.
Shewatter ..	Ditto ..	Ditto.
Sooraj Parbat ..	Hindus ..	For the maintenance of Hindu shrines.
Inam ..	Musalmans and Hindus.	Given as a reward for service both to Hindus and Musalmans.
Munkar ..	Ditto ..	Ditto

Besides the varieties detailed in the above statement, there are many other kinds of *Lakhiraj* in Bengal, which are known by diffierent names in diffierent districts. But of the whole nomenclature, the terms *Al-tamgha*, *Aima*, *Madadi-ma'ash* and *Jagir* signify royal grants.

Aima tenures are peculiar to Bengal, and are no-where else to be found; thus indicating that they form the grants exclusively made by the Kings of Gaur.

The verbal meaning of the term *Aima* is subsistence or maintenance, but technically it signifies a *Jagir* granted by the king, to an especially deserving and venerable person. Grants bearing this designation pertain exclusively to the Syyads, holy men, venerable persons, and the leaders of the Musalman religion. Or, speaking more generally, lands granted by the Kings of Bengal to the religious and spiritual leaders of the Musalmans were termed *Aimas*. Of *Aimas*, again, there are two subdivisions, one is free from assessment, and the other is very lightly assessed. Both the kinds, however, form royal grants. A very small remnant of the rent-free *Aimas* now exist, for most of these were resumed during the *regime* of the Mughal dynasty and then resettled for low rates with their former owners. The difference between *Lakhiraj* or rent-free tenures granted by the Kings of Gaur and those granted by the Mughal Emperors is merely nominal, freehold tenements bestowed by the Kings of Gaur on holy persons, learned men and religious guides, were designated *Aimas* ; while similar grants made by the Mughal Emperors were termed *Madadi-ma'ash*. *Aima* tenures are chiefly to be found in those districts in which the ancient noble Musalman families of Gaur lived. There are twenty-five such districts in Bengal, namely:

(1) Murshidabad.
(2) Nuddea.
(3) 24-Parganahs
(4) Khoolna.
(5) Jessore.
(6) Burdwan.
(7) Hughly.
(8) Midnapore.
(9) Birbhoom.
(10) Bankoorah.
(11) Deenajpore.
(12) Rajshahi.
(13) Rangpore.
(14) Bogra.
(15) Pabna.
(16) Darjeeling
(17) Jalpaiguri.
(18) Dacca.
(19) Faridpore.
(20) Bakarganj.
(21) Mymensingh.
(22) Chittagong.
(23) Noakholly.
(24) Tipperah.
(25) Maldah.

Again, there are 700 lots of *Aïmas* in the district of Murshidabad; in Rajshahi, Bagha and Nattore there are large numbers of *Aïma* lots; in Bogra there are 694 lots ; in Burdwan 1,705 lots ; in Hughly 894 lots; in Bakarganj the number is somewhat smaller, but has not been ascertained precisely; in Midnapore there are 12 lots; in 24 Perganahs 16 lots; and in Maldah, Deenajpore, Noakholly there are some lots also, but their exact number has not been leant. It is evident from the above accounts that there are the largest numbers of *Aima* lots in the districts of Murshidabad, Burdwan, Hughly, Maldah, Rajshahi and Bogra, namely, the districts adjoining Gaur. But even in these districts *Aimas* lie chiefly in such parts as are elevated and free from damp, and where the soil is hard and compact, but rarely in such places as are marshy or sandy or

subject to river floods. Again with regard to the three ancient division, of Bengal, namely, Rarh, Barind and Bang, *Aimas* are to be found mostly in Rarh less in Barind and rarely in Bang.

After the conquest of Bengal by Akbar, when the land-settlement of the country was made by Rajah Todar Mall, most of the *Aimas* were, under the rules of *Sayurghal* converted to domain lands; and, subsequently, during the administrations of the Nazims, Murshid Kuli Khan and Nawab Kasim Ali Khan, *Aima* lands were again resumed and then permanently settled for low rents with their former possessors. Henceforth these lightly assessed tenements came to be called *Aimas.* The general rate of Government revenue for *Aima* lands is three bighas per rupee.

Sir W. Hunter has written in his *Statistical Account of Murshidabad* that the real difference between a cessed *Aima* and *Lakhiraj* is very slight. *Aimas* were granted exclusively to the Musalman, and although revenue has been levied upon them, yet the rates fixed are very low and nominal. The same author has written in his account of Rajshahi that in this district there are *Aimas* in Nattore and and Bagha. All these were granted by the former rulers chiefly to the learned men of the Musalmans and to their holy men, spiritual guides, and religious leaders, and for charitable purposes; these grants date from times far remote from the *deawni* administration ; and the proprietary rights vested by the grants are both hereditary and transferable.

Besides the *Aimas, Madadi-ma'ash* and other varieties of *Lakhiraj* tenures, as detailed in the foregoing statement, are very numerous in Bengal ; and although their exact amount is not known, yet from the statistical accounts it is very clear that it is very large.

When the government of these provinces fell under the sovereign control of the British nation, then, according to Regulation XIX of 1793 of this Government, all *Lakhiraj* tenements exceeding ten bighas, with regard to which the occupiers failed to produce royal *Sanads* were resumed. Under the operation of this Regulation many *bona fide* grants, for which the *Sanads* were not forthcoming, were converted to domain lands.

Atterwards Regulation XXXVII of 1793 was passed for the resumption of life-term and other kinds of *Lakhiraj* tenures other than those forming royal grants, and also such as might be dated earlier than 1765 A.D., of which the occupiers might be in possession of *Sanads*, and of which they should have acquired the possession by fair means before the above-mentioned year, and which had not been previously assessed by the British autuorities for more than its usual revenue.

Finally, Regulation II of 1819 A.D., for the resumption of *Lakhiraj* lands, gave the death-blow to these tenures. It was laid down in section 28 of this Regulation that no *Farman* of the Emperors of Delhi, nor any *Sanad*, or *Parwana* of any Wazir, Nawab, or Rajah, shall be considered valid ground for title, unless such documents can be verified from official records and their genuineness attested to by living witnesses, and that they shall not be accepted as valid merely because of other attestations which they may contain.

Under the operations of the Regulations noticed above, more especially those of the last-mentioned, most of the *Lakhiraj* tenements underwent resumption ; and it is surprising, indeed, that in spite of these sweeping legislative measures, such numerous Musalman *Lakhiraj* tenures should still continue to exist in these provinces.

But let us pause here to ask those who are opposed to our views, whether all these countless *Lakhiraj* tenures (which by their very nature pertain exclusively to the Musalmans) are no standing memorials of equally countless, high, and noble Musalman families in this country, belonging to bygone generations? We maintain that no one can affirm the contrary. Let us further ask whether it is possible that the lines of desecent of all those countless families could have become extinct? and if not, where are their descendants, if not in Bengal; and who are they, if not the present generation of the Musalmans of this country ? We are afraid that any candid reply given to the above questions would but confute the declared opoinion of those who oppose our views.

Let it be remembered that those *Lakhiraj* and *Aima* tenures which were peculiar to the Musalmans are not all at present in their possession. The fact is that, on the one hand, ruin having overtaken the ancient Musalman families, and, on the other hand, the auction rules of Government being in active operation, these tenures have become alienated from their original owners either by public auction by Government or by private sales by themselves, and gradually men of different nations and creeds have acquired possession of the estates of the Musalmans.

Another proof of the same kind is that most of the perganahs, villages, and hamlets in this country bear Musalman names; thus denoting clearly that their Ta-ahhuddars and owners were at one time Musalmans. Formerly it was the custom for landed estates and *Ilakas* to be called after the names of their owners and also to be entered under the same names in the Government registers. For instance, Perganah-i-Barbakabad, Perganah-i-Zafaru Jal, Perganah-i-Jawar Ibrahim, Perganah-i-Barbak,

Perganah-i-Solaman Shahi, Haveli Sherpore, Azmat Shahi Perganah, Hosain Ujl and numerous other such names are borne by perganahs and villages in this country. This sort of nomenclature sufficiently shows that all such estates originally belonged to the Musalmans, and as these appellations bear strong resemblence to the names of the Khilji and Ghori Amirs, the presumption is strong that the owners of these estates were the Amirs and nobles of those times. It was evidently owing to the residence of these lanlords and *Iladkadars* on their estates that the location of high Musalman families in the rural parts received an impetus. Another reason for gentle and noble families preferring to reside in the country was that the rural population were less subject than the urban population to the dangers and disasters that usually attend revolutions and violent changes of Goveernment.* It is the result of these causes combined that high and low born Musalmans at present form so large a section of the rural population of this country.

Traces that still exist in almost every village and hamlet of tombs, sepulchres, monasteries, shrines and mosques, endowed with thousands of *bighas* of *Lakhiraj* lands, of which an insignificant portion only alone survives for its legitimate purpose, indicate the existence, at some remote period, of illustrious and saintly Musalmans in those places.

Note.

* During the times of the Musalman rulers the land of Bengal was divided into two descriptions: one was the "Crown lands", the revenues of which were administered by the Government, and which were denominated the "*Khalasa* lands," and the other kind of lands belonged to the nobles and patricians as constituting their *Jagirs*. The income proceeding from *Khalasa* lands during Akbar's time amounted to Rs. 63,03,752 and that proceeding from *Jagir* amounted to 43 lakhs. (See Parliamentary *V.* Report.)

The Khalasa lands.--*Aumils* were appointed by Government for the administration of the revenues of these lands, and the persons employed under them for the realization and collection of the revenues were called Zemindars. These latter functionaries used to collect the revenues from the ryots and ultimately to remit them to the Government Treasury, for which they were paid by commission at a certain fixed percentage. In

* The Government of the Afghans in Bengal cannot be said to have been monarchical, but nearly resembled the feudal system introduced by the Goths and Vandals into Europe. Bukhtyar Khilji and the succeeding conquerors made choice of a certain district as their own domain: the other districts were assigned to the inferior chiefs, who subdivided the lands amongst their petty commanders, each of whom maintained a certain number of soldiers, composed principally of their relations or dependants; these persons, however, did not cultivate the soil themselves, but each officer was the landlord of a small estate, having under him a certain number of Hindu tenants, to whom, from the principle of self interest, he conducted himself with justice and moderation; and had it not been for the frequent change of masters, and constant scenes of rebellion and invasion, in which private property was little regarded, the cultivators of the soil would have been placed in a state of comparative happiness;and agriculture would have flourished, as it subsequently did in another part of India, under the Government of their countrymen, the Rohillas.

The condition of the upper classes of Hindus must, doubtless, have been much deteriorated, but it is probable that many of the Afghan officers, averse to business, or frequently called away from their homes to attend their chiefs, farmed out their estates to the opulent Hindus, who were also permitted to retain the advantages of manufactures and commerce.

* See, *Ain-i-Akbari*.

Bengal these Zemindars were mostly Hindus of the Kayestha caste. The Zemindars, in fact, possessed no particular right in the lands; on the contrary, they were like all other State servants; but as in those times most of the Government posts were hereditary, so these appointments also were allowed by Government to descend from father to the son. But in reality the dismissal and appointment of the Zemindars were absolutely in the power of the sovereign ruler of the time. These appointments were vacated and filled up according to the pleasure of Government, on the incumbents being found guilty of faults and delinquencies. In those times great responsibilities rested with the Zemindars, such as the collection of the revenues, the remittance of the realizations and rendering proper accounts for the same, and the like other functions. Any delinquency taking place in the realization and remittance of the revenues was visited by heavy punishment on the Zemindars, and they had, on that account, to suffer various hardships and, besides, imprisonment, even bodily torture was one of the punishments laid down for such delinquents. The Zemindars, moreover, had to answer for robbery, dacoity, murder and other serious offences taking place within the area under their control.

One reason for men of the Kayestha caste being mostly appointed as Zemindars was that these men understood agricultural and revenue matters better than other people; and the other reason was that the severities that accompanied the demands of Government in those times, and the serious responsibilities that then lay on the shoulder of the Zemindars, served as deterrents for men of higher classes than the Kayestha taking up the appointment who, as far as possible, kept themselves free from the responsibilities pertainnig to that post. In fact, this profession was invested with so much terror, that even in the early *regime* of the British Government and after the Permanent Settlement had taken place, cautious men, at the outset, hesitated to take zemindaries, and if they were tempted to have them for the sake of gain, they took them under fictitious names. Under these circumstances the Zemindari profession in this country remained almost restricted to the Kayestha caste during the times of the Musalman rulers, and the above practices continued more or less in force throughout this period.

When the British Government commenced, the East India Company vested the Zemindars with hereditary permanent rights in 1793 A.D. Henceforth the Zemindars began to have proprietary rights in the lands. As the income derived from the land kept increasing under the British Government, the condition of the Zemindars consequently became the more improved and prosperous.

The other kind, or the Jagir lands--Under this head I shall deal with *mansabi* and non-*manasabi Jagirs*, and *Aima*, *Madadi-maash* and all other kinds of rent-free lands. These lands belonged to the nobility and gentry of the country. High officers of Government, the *Munsabdars*, men of renown and fame or of noble descent, and spiritual leaders had the grants of *Jagirs*, *Aimas* and *Madadi-maash*. This class of men were esteemed as the flower of the people. The personal expenses of the officers and those of the requirements of their appointments had to be ment out of the revenues of their respective estates. They had to perform the service required of them to their king and the country . Each *Mansabdar* had to maintain a militia force in proportion to the extent of the resources of his *Jagir*, wherewith to serve the Government in time of war. They administered their respective estates on their own account, but they also entrusted the work of the collection of the revenues of their domains to the men of Kayestha caste, who in this capacity also bore the title of Zemindar. The term Zemindar then signified a person who, on receipt of a commission, collected the land revenues on behalf of the owner, and paid the same to him.

The *Jagirs* held by the nobility and the gentry were of two kinds: one of which was hereditary and permanent, and the other was non-hereditary and temporary. The former kind of *Jagirs* was held by eminent ecclesiastics, *i,e*.,those who had the dignity of being the religious leaders of the people, and by men of noble descent. It was not in the power of the sovereign to dispossess these *Jagirdars* of their estates; on the contrary, the sovereign had to follow them in matters social, religious and political.

Although the *Jagirs* of the officers and *Mansabars* were, strictly speaking, of a temporary nature, yet as most of the appointments were, in those times, hereditary, and retained in the family, consequently these *Jagirs* ought rather to be considered as hereditary. The descent of such a *Jagir* in a family was only interrupted in the event of the person holding it, for the time being, by virtue of his office, being dismissed the service. In such a case the *Jagir* thus resumed was invariably bestowed on the person who was appointed to the vacant post. So long as Bengal continued to be governed by its independent rulers, such ejectments from, and allotments of, *Jagirs* seldom took place, except when there was a revolution of Government and the transfer of the sceptre from one

dynasty to another. But whenever the country became subjugated by any foreign power, then of course great changes took place in the former state of things. For instance, when Bengal lost its independence and came under the Government of the Mughal Emperors, the *Mansabi Jagirs* passed from the possession of the ancient noble families of the country and came into the hands of the foreign Mughal nobles. But even then moderation and forbearance were shown towards persons of high origin and religious leaders, inasmuch as either some portion of their *Jagirs* were allowed to remain in their possession, or after the resumption of the entire *Jagirs*, some fresh grants were made to them. The Mughal Emperors, moreover, granted numerous *madad-i-ma-aish* (a kind of free-hold tenure) to the patricians and ecclesiastics of their own times; but resumptions and bestowals of, and additions and alterations in, the *Jagirs* ever continued to take place during the period of the Mughal domination.

Subsequently when the country came under the British administration, all the officers of the previous Government and the *mansabdars* lost their appointments,and all the *Jagirs, mansabi* and non-*mansabi* were resumed by the governing power, and some of the ejected *jagirdars* were assigned stipends in lieu; and instead of the dismissed officers and *mansabdars*, European officers were appointed on salaries payable in cash. But at this time also the British authorities allowed the patrician and ecclesiastical *jagirs* to remain as they were, and enacted laws and regulations to this purpose. Nevertheless, owing to the severities of the laws and from other causes, a great many free-hold tenures and estates came ultimatley to be resumed by Government.

The lands of the *mansabi* and other kinds of *jagirs* that were resumed from time to time were settled with the zemindars for revenues, in a similar manner as were the *khalsa* lands. In fine, the original owners of the lands, who held them free of rent, and who were the principal men of the country, have now disappeared altogether, and in their stead Government revenue agents or zemindars became proprietors of the lands, by virtue of the "Permanent Settlement." This radical change took place at the dawn of the British *regime*, and indeed it is the British Government that has converted the zemindars into landlords, for they had no such conspicuous position before, as they now occupy, for then the *mansabdars* and other *jagirdars* formed the leading men of the country.

Mr. John Grant writes that two-fifths of the lands of Bengal belonged to the nobles and patricians, and the remaining three-fifths to the reigning monarch. From this, it, can be conceived what a large number of dignified persons and *jagirdars* and *mansabdars* lived in this country. Although these *jagirdars* have now disappeared, and their posts have been abolished and their *jagirs* resumed, their foot-prints still exist, and their descendants still live in this country among us.

It would not be without interest to the readers, we presume, if we mention here something relative to the nature of the *mansab* and the holders of such stations, as it would there-from appear in what number these Musalman noblemen were in the empire, and what sort of men these grandees were. For the information of our readers, we give below in a condensed form the Regulation in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, together with the valuable note of Dr. Blochmann thereon.

Notes on the *Cadrs* of Akbar's reign by Professor Blochmann:--

"In this *Ain*--one of the most interesting in the whole work, the Chagtai word *Sayurghal* is translated by the Arabic *Madad-ul-ma'ash*, in Persian *Madad-i-ma'ash*, for which we often find in MSS. *Madad-o-ma'ash*. The latter term signifies 'assistance of livelihood,' and, like its *equivalent* (*milk*), or property, it donotes lands given for been volent purposes, as specified by Abul Fazl. Such lands were hereditary, and differ for this reason from *jagir* or *tuzul* lands, which were conferred, for a specified time, on Mansabdars in lieu of *salaries*.

This *Ain* proves that Akbar considerably interfered with *Sayurghal* land arbitrarily, resuming whatever lands he liked, and increasing the domain, or *khalasah* lands to the ruin of many a Mahommedan (Afghan) family. He also completely broke the power of the *Cadr* whose dignity, especially before the Mughal dynasty, had been very great. It was the *Cadr*, or as he was then generally styled, *Cadr-i-Jahan*, whose edict legalized the *Jalus* or accession of a new king. During the reign of Akbar also, he ranked as the fourth officer of the empire (*vide* end of *Ain* 30). The power of these *Cadrs* was immense. They were the highest law-officers, and had the powers which Administrators-General have among us; they were in charge of all lands devoted to ecclesiastical and benevolent purposes, and possessed and almost unlimited authority of confering such lands independently of the king. They were also the highest ecclesiastical law-officers, and might exercise the powers of High Inquisitors. Thus Abdul Nabi, during his *Cadrship*, ordered two men to be killed for heresy (*vide* p. 177).

In the times before the Mughals, the terms *idrarat, wazaif, milk, inam-i-dehha, inam-i-zaminha*, &c., occur for the word *Sayurghal* (or *Seyurghal*, or *Sughurghal*, as some dictionaries spell it).

Among the former kings, Ala-ud-din Khilji is notorious for the disregard with which he cancelled the grants of former rulers. He resumed the greater part of the *Madad-i-ma'ash* tenures, and made them domain lands. He also lowered the dignity of the *Cadr* by appointing his key-bearer to this high office (*Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 353). Qutb-uddin Mubarik Shah, however, during the four years and four months of his reign, reinstated many whom Ala-ud-din had deprived (T.F.,p.358).

That Share Shah has often been accused by Mughal historians for his bounty in conferring lands, has been mentioned above (*Ferishta*, p. 256 note); and this may have been one of the reasons why Akbar showed such an unexpected severity towards the grant-holders of his time.

Each *culah* had a *Cadr-i-Juz*, or provincial *Cadr*, who was under the orders of the Chief *Cadr* (*Cadr-i-Jahan, or Cadr-i-Kul, or Cadr-i-Cudur*).

Just as in every other department, bribery was also extensively carried on in the offices of the *Cadrs*. The land specified in the *farman* of a holder rarely corresponded in extent with the land which he actually held; or the language of the *farman* was ambiguously worded, to enable the holder to take possession of as much as he could, and keep it as long as he bribed the *Kazis* and Provincial *Cadrs*. Hence Akbar had every reason, after repeated inquiries, to cancel grants conferred by former rulers. The religious views of the Emperor (vide *Ferishta*, p. 167), and the hatred which he showed to the *'Ulama*, most of whom held lands, furnished him with a personal, and therefore stronger, reason to resume their grants, and drive them away to Bhakkar in Sind,or to Bengal,the climate of which, in those days, was as notorious as in later days, that of Gombroon. After the fall of Abdul Nabi--a man whom Akbar used once to honour by adjusting his slippers—Sultzn Khwajah, a member of the Divine Faith (vide *Ferishta* p. 204), was appointed as *Cadr*; and the *Cadrs* after him were so limited in the power of conferring lands independently of Akbar and had so few grants to look after, as to tempt Badaoni to indulge in sarcastical remarks. The following were Akbar's *Cadrs*:—

1. Shaikh Gadai, a Shiah, appointed at the recommenda·ion of Bairam Khan, till 968.
2. Khwaja Muhammad Calish, till 971.
3. Shaikh Abdul Nabi, till 986.
4. Sultan Khwajah, till his death in 993.
5. Amir Fathullah of Shiraz, till 997.
6. *Cadr* Jahan, whose name coincides with the title of his office.

Abul Fazl also mentions of a *Cadr*, Maulana Abdul Baqi ; but I do not know when he held offlce.

I extract a few short passages from Badaoni:—

Page 29. Shaikh Gadai cancelled the *Madad-i-ma'ash* lands, and took away the legacies of the Khanzadas (Afghans) and gave a *Sayurghal* to any one that would bear up with humiliating treatment, but not otherwise. Nevertheless, in comparison with the present time, when obstacles are raised to the possession of every *jarib* of ground, nay, even less, you may call the Shaikh an *A'lambaksh* (one who gives away a world).

Page 52. After Shaikh Gadai, Khwaja Muhammad Calish was, in 968, appointed *Cadr*; but he did not possess such extensive powers in conferring lands as *Madad-i-ma'ash*, because he was dependent on the Diwans.

Page 71. In 972, or perhaps more correctly in 971, Shaikh Abdul Nabi was made *Cadr*. In giving away lands, he was to consult Muzaffar Khan, at that time Vazir and Vakil. But soon after the Shaikh acquired such absolute powers, that he conferred on deserving people whole worlds of subsistence-allowances, lands and pensions, so much so that if you place the grants of all former kings of Hindustan in one scale, and those of the Shaikh into the other, his scale would weigh more. But several years later the scale went up as it had been under former kings, and matters took an adverse turn.

Page 204. In 983, His Majesty gave the order that the *aimas* of the whole empire should not be let off by the Kroris of each pergunanh unless they brought the *farmans* in which their grants, subsistence-allowances, and pensions were described to the *Cadr* for inspection and verification. For this reasin, a large number of worthy people, from the eastern districts up to the Bhakkar on the Indus, came to court. If any of them had a powerful protector in one of the grandees or near friednds of His Majesty, he could manage to have his affair settled; but those who were destitute of such recommendations, had to bribe Sayyid 'Abdurrasul, the Shaikh's headman, or make presents to his *farrashes*,

darbans (porters), *sayces* (grooms), and methirs (sweepers), 'in order to get their blanket out of the mire.' Unless, however, they had either strong recommendations, or had recourse to bribery, they were utterly ruined. Many of the *aimadars* without obtaining their object died from the heat caused by the press of the crowds of petitioners. Though a report of this came to the ears of His Maejsty, no one dared to take these unfortunate people before the Emperor. And when the Shaikh, in all his pride and haughtiness, sat upon his *Masnad* (cushion), and influential grandees introduced to him, in his office, scientific or pious men, the Shaikh received them in his filthy way, paid respect to no one, and after much asking, begging and exaggerating, he allowed, for example, a teacher of the *Hidayah* (a book on law) and other college books, 100 bighas, more or less; and though such a man might have been for a long time in possession of more extensive lands the Shaikh took them away. But to men of no renown, to low fellows, even to Hindus, he gave free-hold lands as marks of personal favour. Hence science and scientific men fell in estimation. * * *

The fate of Abdul Nabi has been related above. Akbar gave him money for the poor of Mecca and sent him on a pilgrimage. When he came back, he was called to account for the money was put in prison and murdered 'by some scoundrel' in 992 A.H.

The next *Cadr* was Sultan Khwajah. Matters relating to *Sayurghals* now took a very different course. Akbar had by this time rejected Islam, and the new *Cadr*, who had just returned from Makkah, became a member of the Divine Faith. The systematic persecution of the learned and the lawyers had commenced, and His Majesty inquired perosnally into all grants (vide *Ferishta* p. 180, last para). The lands were now steadily withdrawn, and according to Badaoni, who had managed to get 1,000 bighas at first, to the great disgust of Abdul Nabi, many a Mahommedan family was impoverished or utterly ruined.

In 993, Fathullah, of Shiraz (vide *Ferishta*, p 38), was appointed *Cadr*. As the *Sayurghal* duties, and with them the dignity of the *Cadr* had dwindled down to nothing, Fathullah, though *Cadr*, could be spared for missions to the Dakhin. Bad., p.343.

"His Shirazi servant Kamal officiated for him during his absence, and looked after these lacklands of *aimadars*, who had a few spots here and there; for the dignity of the *Cadr* had approached its *kamal* (prefection). Fathullah had not even the power of conferring five bighas; in fact he was an imaginary *Cadr*, as all lands had been withdrawn. And yet the lands which had been withdrawn became the dwelling places of wild animals, and thus belonged neither to the *aimadars* nor to farmers. However, of all these oppressions, there is at least a record left in the books of the *Cadr*, though of the office o the *Cadr* the name only is left.

(*Ferishta*, page 368). Fathullah (the *Cadr*, himself) laid before His Majesty a bag containing the sum of Rs. 1,000, which his collector by means of oppression, or under the pretext that an *aimadar* was not forthcoming or was dead, had squeezed out of the widows and unfortunate orphans of the Pergunnah of Basawar (which was his *jagir*), and said "My collectors have collected this much from the *aimadars* as a *kifayat* (i,e., because the collectors thought the *Sayurghal* holders had more than sufficient to live upon)." But the Emperor allowed him to keep the sum for himself.

The next *Cadr*, *Cadr* Jahan, was a member of the Divine Faith. Though appointed *Cadr* immediately after the death of Fathuallah, Badaoni continues calling him Mufti-i-mamalik-i- mahrusah, the Mufti of the Empire, which had been his title before. Perhaps it was no longer necessary to have a separate officer for the *Cadrship*. *Cadr* Jahan continued to serve under Jahangir.

A great portion of the *Sayurghal* lands is specified by Abul Fazl in the geographical tables of the Third Book.

CHAPTER III

THE PHYSIQUE, FEATURES AND CHARACTERISTIC TRAITS OF THE MUSALMANS OF BENGAL

WHATEVER might have been the facial and other characteristics of the original Musalman settlers, all the lineaments and traits thereof have been effaced and obliterated in their descendants in this country, by the effects of the climate and soil, during a long process of time. The fair and ruddy complexion of the Mughals and Pathans and the courage and valour of the Arabs and Ajams are no longer therefore to be found in their posterity in this country. It is indeed hardly possible for a race to manintain its peculiar characteristics against the influence of a foreign climate and of intercourse with foreign people, coupled with the stress of a hard life and poverty. Brahmans, Rajputs and Englishmen are said to have sprung from the same Aryan stock. But is it possible to guess from their appearance and habits the the Brahmans and the English are of the same stock? The difference between them is as wide as that between the heaven and the earth. Professions and callings also bring about some modification in the physical appearance of men. See how a hunter's complexion and appearance becomes altered by exposure to sun and rain. Above all, the effects of poverty are most pernicious. Notwitstanding these several causes, there yet exists a material difference between the physical constitution and apearances of those Musalmans of Bengal who are descended from Arabs and Ajams and the Hindus of this country. This difference would be most conspicuous if a comparison were made between persons of equal postions in the two communities and who were also pursuing the same calling.

Let us now consider te evidence of language. The dialects of the Musalmans of Bengal and its accentuation differ widely from those of their Hindu neighbours. The Bengali language as spoken by these Musalmans has an admixture of Arabic and Persian words which fact is indicative of their descent; for change of religion does not necessitate a change in language. Had these Musalmans owed their origin to the conversion of the Hindus, they would have certainly spoken the same language as the Hindus. Moreover, the habits and customs of these Musalmans are quite dissimilar from those of their Hindu countrymen. This difference would be fully perceptible on a close examination of the modes of life and avocations followed by the males and females of these two communities. These evidences show that the major part of the large Musalman section of the Bengal population are descended frcm Arab, Iranian, Turkish and Afghan ancestors.

Mr. H. H. Risley, who was deputed by Government to make an ethnographic survey oi the tribes and castes oi Bengal, has recently published a book containing the results of his enquiries. As this work bears directly on the subject of our enquiry (the origin of the Musalmans of Bengal), it is desirable to notice here some of the operations of the ethnograplical survey which have reference to the Musalmans.

It is to be regretted that this official gentleman, while taking scientific measurements of the different races of Bengal, has committed a grave and grievous mistake, by which the Musalmans are placed in a disadvantageous light. The error is this: he has dealt with the Hindu community according to the order of its organization, deducing results of physical measurements separately for each of the castes into which the community is divided according to the various professions of the men. But with reference to the Musalmans, he has treated them *en masse* without any regard to their races and professions, working out but one result for the whole community in general; although there are many different races among the Musalmans of this country such as the descendants of Arabs, Iranians, Turks, Afghans, and other foreign nations, as also of the vrious tribes of Hindustan, who had embraced Islam, and also men of different professions in this community. Professions, no doubt, produce appropriate effects on the physique of men, more especially on that of the agriculturists and labourers in the fields, who are greatly exposed to the influences of the weathers, and who form more than 62 per cent of the Musalman population of Bengal. Such being the case, we question the accuracy of Mr. Risley's plan in finding a single result for all the Musalmans taken as a whole, and then comparing that solitary result with those of the separate castes of the Hindus. In this respect injustice has certainly been done to the Musalmans.

It is indeed almost difficult to accurately trace the origin of the Musalmans of this country; and although much change has taken place in their constitution owing to their intermingling with other races and from the effects of climate, soil, food, and modes of life, and in consequence of their professions and habits, yet a close examination of their forms and features, habits and customs, would show that most of these Musalmans are descended from foreign ancestors. Correct results from comparison are obtainable only when the average result of the physical examinations professing one calling is compared with that of an equal number of men of any other race pursuing the same profession. Or, if the Musalman and Hindu communities were each properly classified according to

rank, and then the men of one of the classes of the one were compared to those of the corresponding class of the other, fairly correct results can also be secured.

The result of Mr. Risley's anthropological survey, which has been submitted by him to the Ethnological Society of England, was thus epitomized in the *Oudh Akhbar* of the 15th September 1890:—

"The physical measurements and anthropological examination of the people have revealed the existence of two distinct races of men in Bengal, namely, the Aryan and the aboriginal. The former is represented by the Brahmans, Rajputs, and Sikhs. These generally have tall forms, light complexion and fine noses, and are in general appearance superior to the middle class of Europeans. The Kols are a specimen of the latter. These have short stature, dark complexion, and snub noses, and approach the African blacks in appearance. All eminent anthropologists agree in considering the nasal index the most valuable race characteristic, and the observations made in India also lend support to this opinion. The races and tribes of Bengal are quite confused and blended. The social rank of a race becomes reduced in proportion to the increased flatness of the nose. The lower a man's origin the flatter is his nose, as resembling those of the African negroes; the higher his origin the more he resembles the Europeans in appearance."

Mr. Risley's statement, that the Brahmans, Rajputs, and Sikhs represent the Aryan race, strkes us as strange. For the Sikhs are not, in fact, ay particular race nor does the term in any way imply ethnological affinity between the individuals who come under that category. Any person, whether of Aryan or non-Aryan origin, who embraces the doctrines promulgated by Baba Nanak is called a Sikh. The term is the class name of a religious sect and not of any particular race or a branch of a race. Sikh is a Panjabi term meaning a "disciple." Baba Nanak, the founder of the sect, addressed his dicsiples by this name. These disciples were called by their posterity "Guru ke Sekh," *i.e.*, the disciples of the founder of the religion. Any person, whether of high or low origin, becomes a Sikh on going through the initiatory ceremony which they call *Pahel.* The following are the rituals of the ceremony:—*Sharbat* is prepared by dissolving *batashas* into water; into this *sharbat*, the *guru* or the priest dips the toe of his right foot; he then puts the point of a naked sword into it, and afterwards imbibes a portion if it himself, and then gives the rmainder to the novice to drink; and also sprinkles on his face a little of the *sharbat,* instructing him at the same time in the canons formulated by Gobind Singh, their tenth *guru*, and enjoins upon him the due observance of those doctrines. There have been ten *gurus* of the Sikh creed,—form Guru Nanak down to Guru Govind Singh. All these Gurus belonged to the Khettri caste.

It is mentioned in the history called *The Makhzan-i-Panjab* in respect to the races of the provinces.

"Be it known that the Sikhs predominate in the northern and the eastern parts of the Panjab. This (preponderance of the Sikhs) is mainly due to the fact that because

this country remained for a long time subject to the Government of the Sikhs, the respect and esteem commanded by them induced most of the Hindus to turn Sikhs; even the *mehters* and sweepers used to undergo the Pahel (the Sikh baptismal ceremony) and were called 'Dharanghareti Sikhs.' Among the followers of this faith there are Hindus of every caste. But after one has undergone the *Pahel* ceremony, his former nationality is altogether changed, and he becomes a Sikh."

Likewise there are both Musalmans and Hindus among the Rajput tribe. Those of the tribe that adhere to the religion of their fathers, as well as those who have embraced Islam or those descended from them are all Rajputs. In the Panjab there are countless Musalman Rajputs.

Great injustice has indeed been done to the Musalmans by Mr. Risley. His book entitled "*The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*" contains the following table of the average height and width of the noses of the different sects and castes inhabiting this country:—

Names of the Tribes of Bengal	Average nasal height.	Average nasal width.
Brahman	49.7	35
Musalman	49.4	38.3
Kayestha	50.2	35.3
Bagdi	46.7	37.6
Baori	46.6	36.7
Chandal	96.2	36.7
Goalah	49	36.4
Kybatta	48	36.6
Mali	43.9	41.5
Mal Behari	44.1	41
Mochi	49.1	41
Pod	49.1	36.8
Rajbansi	48.9	37.5
Shadgop	45.6	37.7

According to this table, the average nasal height of the Brahmans is 49.7 and the width 35, or the height execeeds the width by 14.7; and the average nasal height of the Musalmans is given as 49.4 and the width 38.3; the height in this case exceeds the width by 11.1. Te difference between the excesses of the nasal heights of the two has accrued owing to the different castes of the Hindus being severally delt with and the Musalmans *en masse* and without any classification whatever.

If we average the nasal heights and the widths of twelve individuals of the twelve Hindu castes mentioned in the above table, *viz.* (1) Brahaman; (2) Kayestha; (3) Bagdi; (4) Baori; (5) Chandal; (6) Goalah; (7) Kybatta; (8) Mali; (9) Mochi; (10) Pod; (11) Rajbansi; (12) Shadgop; and, likewise, those of twelve different Musalmans,—according to the figures given in the book under notice; the mean nasal height of the Hindus would be 47.8 and the width 36.5 or the height exceeding width

by 11.1, and those of the Musalmans 50.2 and 38.8 respectively; the nasal height exceeding the width by 11.4. It is remarkable that the slight modification, *viz.*, averaging the given figures, gives quite a new turn to the results.

Another remarkable fact is that in the book in question the particulars of measurements of the Musalmans of Eastern Bengal alone are laid down. The anomaly seems to have been carried to further excess, as we find that altogether 185 Musalman subjects were examined. Out of this number, 27 in Chittagong; 57 in Mymensingh; 13 in Tipperah; 38 in Dacca; 33 in Faridpore; and the remaining 17 in Barisal, Noakhally and Pabna. But as regards the Hindu subjects, they were examined in equal numbers in all the Eastern, Central and Western Districts of Bengal.

The names of the subjects mentioned in the book engendered the suspicion that none but the lowest orders of Musalmans were examined; and in order to satisfy myself in this point, I interrogated on the subject the Hospital Assistant, Babu Komod Behari Samanta, who during the operations assisted Mr. Risley, and to whom the work of the anthropological measurements of the subjects in Bengal was exclusively entrusted. I learnt from him that he purposely did not take the measurements of any Musalman of birth, postion and respectability, but of only their lowest classes, because he said it was the express order of Mr. Risley to take measurmenents of only the low-class Musalmans of Eastern Bengal, and of these not even to examine nor include in the records of his examiniations the physical measurements of such as possessed regular features. For this reason he visited some of the jails of the Eastern Districts of Bengal, and took the measurements of some prisoners therein, and transmitted them to Mr. Risley, by whom they were ultimately embodied in his work under notice.

The order of Mr. Risley to examine exclusively the low-class Musalamans of Eastern Bengal, and even of these not to record the measurements of those who possessed symmetrical features, is certainly a most curious and peculiar one. Komod Babu himself says that the nature of the order is an inexplicable mystery to him. Under these circumstances, how can Mr. Risley's opinion regarding the Musalmans be just and favourable to them? And how can the results of his anthropological and ethnographical examinations of the Musalmans, as recorded in his book, be correct and reliable?

We, however, assert that, apart from all technical and scientific considerations, any person who possesses the least degree of judgement can percieve that the generality of the Muslamans of Bengal have better

forms, features and colour than the other races of this country ; in other words, the "tall figure, light complexion, fine nose and generally good apperance," which, according to Mr.Risley's opinion, are the data of a superior race, are more to be met with among the high-class Musalmans than among the Hindus of an equal class. As regards the nasal index, which is deemed to be the most valuable race characteristic, we percieve this peculiarity that the noses of the non-Aryan inhabitants of this ountry are wide, small and thick; while those of the generality of the Muslamans are thin, high and erect. In short, the noses of the high-born Musalmans are generally finer than those of the Hindus of the same position; and likewise the noses of the lower orders of the former are better than those of the same classes of the latter. An examination of the noses of these two people alone would show that the generality of the Musalmans of this country are not descended from the original native races and tribes of Bengal.

CAPTER IV

AN ACCOUNT OF THE ANCIENT MUSALMAN FAMILIES IN BENGAL

It is very difficult to give the history of the ancient Musalman families in Bengal. For many of them have been so wrecked and ruined that the members therof hardly know their own lineage and the particulars of their ancestors; ignorance and poverty have so much reduced them to low position that they are now altogether fused with the masses. Again, often the heads of some of the high and noble familes have had to fly for their lives to some remote and insulated part of the country on the revolutions of Government where they concealed their identity and passed their lives in obscurity. This practice had to be resorted to, not only during the time of the Mughal supremacy, but on the occasion of each change of Government, both before and after that epoch. The descendants of these refugees generally lived so long in a degraded condition that this altered state became at last the natural condition of their families. Many a family have also sunk gradually into utter obscurity owing to the growing ignorance of its members.

Those ancient families that have been safe form the destructive operations of the avobe mentioned causes are still numerous in Bengal. We are unable to enumerate them all for the reasons (i) that *all* of them are not known to us; (ii) that they are so numerous that a mere catalouge of of them would fill volumes. But we shall give the particulars of some of the ancient and well-known families by way of illustration.

It should, in the first place, be understood that there are four principal races, *viz*, (1) Syyads; (2) Shaikhs; (33) Mughals and (4) Pathans, that are considered to constitute the Musalman gentry in this country.

(1) The Syyad race take the precedence of the other three in rank, and is generally esteemed the most dignified. This noble race is divided into two main lines,— one is the branch of the Beni Fatemite Syyads, and the other that of the Ulvi Beni Fatemite Syyads. Those who are descended from Hasan or Husain (the pace of God be on them!), that is to say, those descended form Hazarat Ali and his wife, the holy Lady Fatema (may the mercy of God be on them !) are called Fatemite Syyads. The Ulvi Syyads are those who are descended from (Hazrat) Ali by his wives other than the Lady Fatema. The Fatemite Syyads are superior in rank to the Ulvi Syyads as being the descendants of the Prophet Mahommed (peace be on

him!). The Fatemite branch of the Syyads has, again, several offshoots, each of which is denominated by the name of any of the twelve Immas (peace on them!), or to speak more definitely, the line of each of these Imam descendants is designated according to his own name; such as the Hosaini Syyads, Hasani Syyads, Moosavi Syyads, Razvi Syyads, Kazemi Syyads, Takavi Syyads, Nakavi Syyads, and so on. Likewise some of the Syyads name their lines after those of some renowned eminent men among their ancestors, such as Zaidi, Ismaili, Taba Tabai, Kadri and the like. Some families are designated by the land they inhabit, as Bokhari, Kermani, Tabrezi, Shabzawari, &c. Those Syyads that are descended, on their father's and mother's sides, from(Hazrats) Hasan and Hosain are distinguished as Hasani-ul-Hosaini, and are foremost in rank and dignity among all the rest of the branches and families of the Syyads.

(2) *Koraishi Shaikhs*—This race is very respectable, for the Prophet of God (may peace be on him !) belonged to the stock from which it has sprung. Several lines branch out from this race; each line bearing the name of the *Sehabie* (or companion of the Prophet) from which it has descended, as for instance, Siddiki, Farooki, Asmani, Abbasi, Khaledi, and the like. Both the Syyads and Koraishi Shaikhs are of Arab origin. In Iran, Afghanistan and Khorasan, the descendants of great saints, renowned, learned men and celebrated ecclesiastics are also surnamed Shiakhs.

(3) *Mughal*—This is a Mongolian race; Chinghiz Khan was the greatest monarch of this race. The religion of this people was originally Paganism. But after Chinghiz Khan's grandson embraced Islam, masses of this nation, following the example of their king, became converted to this faith. All the kings of the Chaghtai line were Musalmans. It was due to the Mughal dominion in India that this race became largely introduced among the Indian population. These people have the applleation cf Mirza or Beg. There are many branches and offshoots of this race.

(4) *Pathans.*—This is an Afghan race, and its original hime is Afghanistan. It was owing to the Pathans holding sway for a long time in India that this people has become so largely diffused over this country. They are designated *Khans.* This race also has many branches and ramifications.

It is to be added that men belonging to the native races of this country who embraced Islam were, as a matter of courtesy, denominated either *Shaikh* or *Khan* or *Malick.*

Of the four principal races mentioned above, a great majority of the Musalaman population of Bengal is composed of the various classes of Syyads, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans, or to speak more definitely of the

Syyads, Hasani-ul Hosaini, Hasaini, Hosaini, Razwi Musawi, Nakwi, Takwi, Zaidi, Ismaili, Taba-Tabai, Ulvi, Bokhari, Kermani, Shabzawari, &c., and of the Shaikhs, Siddiki, Farooki, Osmani, Abbasi, Khaledi, Harssi, &c. ; and Mirzas, Begs, and Khans, that is, Mughals and Pathans.

Venerable and eminent Syyads and Shaikhs who, during the time of the kings of Gaur, occupied themselves in imparting religious instruction to the people and as spiritual leaders were venerated by the Court, and distinguished by the titles of *Shah* or *Khondkar*. Their descendants, up to the present day, bear these ecelesiastical designations. The application of the appellation *Khondkar* is local to this country. Since the time of the kingdom of Gaur it has been in use to denominate venerable ecelesiastics and their descendants here. Among the Mughals and Pathans there is a class called *Malick*, an epithet of distinction pertaining chiefly to the Ghori and Khilji Ameers (chiefs and noblemen). But these Ameers sometimes honoured proselytes from the Hindu religion with their own title and called them *Malicks* as themselves. Henceforth they and their descendants have borne that appelllation. Sundry other Musalman converts and their descendants are likewise known by the appellations of Shaikh and Khan. Among the classes called Shaikh, Khan and Malick there are both well-born and low-born men. The classes called Kazi and Chaudhari belong to one or the other of the four foreign races, *viz.*, Shaikh, Syyad, Mughal and Pathan, They hold this surname owing to some one of their ancestors having filled some official position and acquired a corresponding designation. There are some Muslamans in this country who, although of a purely Arab origin, are called, as a matter of respect, Thakur, which is the special denomination of the leading men of the Hindus. And others, because their ancestors were originally Hindu Thakurs, Biswas and the like, retained their caste donominations even after their conversion, and their descendants are called by those appellations up to this day. Among the gentry of this country there are some families who can trace up their genealogical tree even to Adam (may peace be on him!). Among them also are high-born persons who have descended from a line of ancestors whose male and female sides were of eqally high origin and respectability, never intermarrying beyond the circle of their own kith and kin, or under any circecumstance foriming any unequal connections.

With regard to the four old divisions of Bengal, *viz.*, Rarh, Barind, Bagri and Bangodesh, the Musalman gentry live chiefly in the first and the the last, and the common people in the remaining two. Again, the descendants of the Musalmans of the times of the Ghori and the Khilji

dynasties predominate in Rarh and Barind, and those of the Musalman comers during the Mughal period in Bengodesh and Bagri. The former live mostly in rural parts, and the latter reside chiefly in cities and towns and their immediate surroundings. The great majority of the good and high families live in the villages and hamlets, the reason of which, as has been already stated, was that in former times, cities and towns were much liable to the disasters attending the revolutions of Governments, and were frequently made the scenes of political tragedies, and also that *Aimas*, *Madadi-ma'ash* and similar other grants made by the rulers to the gentry lay commonly in rural parts, and consequently the grandees went to live on their estates in those parts. This state of things was not peculiar to Bengal, but general to all parts of Hindustan, and gave occasion to a very large number of noble families living in the country throughout India.

We will now briefly notice the particulars of some of the eminent families in Bengal. The most noble and pre-eminent family is that of the Nawab Nazim, in Murshidabad, which is unsurpassed, if not unequalled, by any family in the whole of India. This great family belongs to the Taba--Tabai branch of the Hasani-ul Hosani Syyads. Wherever and whenever the collateral branches of this family have lived, thay have invariably exercised power and commanded general respect. The most exalted aristocratic rank of this family is only equalled by the great dignity of its highly distinguished origin. The particulars of this family are given in great detail in the *Undatul Taleb Fi Ansabi al-i Abi Taleb* in the *Tarikhi Mansuri.*

In the city of Murshidabad and its environs many ancient families of Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans reside. Among the gentry of the Mufassil, the Syyads of Fateh Singh, Soonti and Balghattiaa, and the Khondkars of Fateh Singh, and also the Kazis and Chaudharies are famous for their good descent, and their families are very ancient and respectable. The Khondkars of the locality are descended from the very old and respectable line of Abu Bakr, the first Khalif. Kazi Shaikh Sirajuddin, their ancestor, came to Bengal in the reign of Sultan Ghias-uddin, King of Gaur, and was afterwards elevated to the bench of the Quazi-ul Quzzat or Chief Justice of the Metropolitan city of Gaur. This family is distinguished for the good origin of both its male and female ascending lines. Sultan Ghias-uddin reigned from 769 to 775 Hijrees.

In the district of Birbhoom, the Syyads, Shaikhs and Pathans constitute the Musalman gentry. Of these, the Syyads, Shaikhs and Chaudharies of Khooshtigiri, Damdama, Nawadah, Hazratpore, Surgaun, Mandgaun,

&c., and the Pathans of Nagar and other places, are very famous. The Syyads of Khooshtigiri and other localities are of a highly respectable origin, and their families are of reat antiquity. Their common ancestor came to this country in 899 Hijree, in the reign of Feroze Shah, King of Gaur, and their forefathers have always occupied positions of honour and dignity.

Among the numerous gentle families in the district of Burdwan, the most ancient and eminent are those of the Syyads of Jafarabad, Raigaun, Changharia, Bagha, &c., the Khondkars of Samsar, Sayer, Moorgaun, Kasyarah, &c., and the Shakhs of Mangalkot, Jhiloo, Aral, Keogaun and other places.

In the district of Hughly, Pundwa is important as a place of residence, from a very remote period, of a large congregation of ancient and respectable Musalman families. There are also other places in this district where high and good Musalman families reside.

Among the gentry of Midnapore the Syyads and Pathans are very famous.

In the district of the 24-Pergunnahs, ever since Calcutta became the capital of India, every description of Musalmans have flocked to it, and make up an important section of the metropolitan population ; and among these there are many of a high birth and distinguished origin. In the Mufassil, too, there are good and respectable families of Musalmans.

Among the gentry, of the district of Nadia, the Khondkars of Bamanpokhur and the Syyads and Khondkars of Betai, Meherpore and other places are famous for their distinguished lineage.

In the district of Rajshahi, the Khondkars of Bogra and Nattore are very famous for their noble origin. They belong to the race of Abbasi Shaikhs, and are descended from the Caliph Harun-al-Rashid. Their family is very ancient in this country. It came here during the period of the Gaur kings, and has ever been held in high estimation and great respect. Their ancestors Khondkar Moin-ul-Islam, Khondkar Badr-ul-Islam and Khondkar Rafi-ul-Islam occupied pre-eminent positions and were among the leading men of thier times, and mention of them is made in the various history of Bengal, in connection with the accounts of the kings of Gaur. The Pathans of Nattore and other places are aslso very famous.

In the district of Maldah, the Syyads and Pathans are very famous for their good lineage and honourable descent.

In the city of Dacca and its surrounding parts there are numerous

respectable and ancient families of Syyads, Shaikhs, Kazis, Shahs and other races and classes of the Musalmans.

In the districts of Faridpore, Mymensingh, Jessore, Pabna, Deenajpore Rangpore, Bakarganj, Noakholly and Comillah there are numerous high and good families of Syyads, Shaikhs, Pathans & c. ; so also in the district of Sylhet and the adjoining districts. Likewise there are numbers of respectable and ancient families of Musalmans in the district of Chittagong and the adjacent districts. Besides the above there are countless other noble, high, respectable and ancient Musalman families in Bengal, but my limited information on the subject and the narrow scope of this chapter preclude any special mention of them here, for which shortcoming I hope to be excused.

CHAPTER V

THE OCCUPATION OF THE MUSALMANS

According to the ancient and prevailing customs among the well-born Musalmans, that is to say, among the Syyads, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans of Arab, Turkish, Iranian and Afghan origin, the best and most honourable mode in their opinion, of ganing their livelihood, was by the professions of the sword and the pen, and also from the income and realization of landed states and property. All professions except these two and all handicrafts and shop-keeping were regarded by them as derogatory to their rank and dignity. Moreover, it was not allowable for them, according to their notions of respectability, to till and cultivate lands with their own hands ; and they used to have their lands cultivated by hired labour, and so to reap the benefit from their produce. Whoever departed from these established customs was looked down upon by the whole class, and lost the good opinion of his fellows.

These usages were not peculiar to the high class Musalmans, but were also in full force among the high caste Hindus. Formerly no Rajput could pursue any other calling than that of the swrod, nor could a Brahman adopt any other except the ecclesiastical profession. But times have changed, and with them these old and inconvenient customs. The Rajputs have gone beyond the limited scope allowed to their operations by their caste laws which bound them to a single kind of profession, and are found engaged in various occupations, even tilling their lands with their own hands. The Brahmans have also done the same, and are employed in various services and pursue various callings and live on incomes derived from landed property, the only prohibition of custom is against driving the plough with their own hands ; but they may perform all other agricultural functions, as those that can be done with the spade, hoe, scythe, or other implements, and also such as sowing, the transplantation of seedling, the weeding and irrigation of the fields, the reaping of corns, the gathering in of the harvest, and the such other work.

Formerly the proper and decent way for the Musalman gentry to gain their livelihood was, as has been mentioned before, by means of civil and military professions, and from the income of lands. But when these sources failed them, they were obliged to take up different kinds of arts and profesions, to enter into various services and to engage in agricultural labour. The soldier classes, when they failed to obtain military employment, took

exclusively to agriculture, considering all other occupation as unsuited to their temperament. But among the superior classes of Musalmans and Hindus certain kinds of service and most of the handicrafts are still regarded as highly derogatory, and whoever of them engages in these low occupations becomes degraded and loses his social position. The result of the high class Musalmans, in former times, considering trade as not a respectable profession, is that there has been scarcely, if ever, any great or rich merchant among the native Musalmans of this country. Musalman traders and shop-keepers found in any part of Hindustan are mostly descended from Hindu ancestors belonging to the trading classes, who even after their conversion to the Mahommedan faith have adhered to their ancestral profession and also have bred up their children in the same profession.

If, however, any Musalman of birth, belonging to the pure race of Syyads, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans, is found engaged in trade, which is very rare, and if his case is properly enquired into, he would most probably be found not to belong to any ancient family in this country, or if so, it would then appear that some one of his ancestors had been obliged to engage in this profession under some great emergency and pressing necessity. The fact is, that formerly among the aristocracy and gentry of the Musalmans, their ancient and time honoured customs which were, indeed, most strict and stringent, held undisputed sway. Being thus precluded, by their old customs, from the best means of inctreasing their capital, that is, trade, they were unable to augment their national wealth, and have now become reduced to the last degree of poverty and indigence.

The scope of Government service is very narrow in comparison with the wide latitude of trade, and the emolument of the former is far smaller in proportion to the gains of the latter. Lands, too, have a limited extent, and the profits of agriculture cannot impart so much prosperity as those of commerce. Of all professions trade has the widest latitude : its gains are unbounded and its benefits countless. No nation can acquire wealth and attain prosperity except by trade. The trading nations are the richest and most prosperous in the world. Those who reject trade in fact deprive themselves of the greatest source of wealth.

The Brahmans and Rajputs are, from the same cause, as poor and impecunious as the Muslamans ; while the Jews, although their nation does not possess any territory anywhere in the world, are yet everywhere in affluent and easy circumstances owing to thier trading propensities and to the blessings of trade.

Our co-religionists, although they did not view with disapprobation commerce and trade on a large scale, considered, however, shop-keeping and retail-selling as a paltry business and a non-respectable one. But it should be borne in mind that it is very difficult to become a successful merchant at once and without previously having had experience as as hop-keeper and a retail-seller. Indeed, it is only by slow degrees that men can acquire proficiency in any art or trade and derive advantages from them. In the first place, we have not so large a capital that we can at once set as great merchants, and, in the second place, we cannot expect to derive benefit from commerce and guard against loss, until we have learnt the ways and modes of conducting it. This matter is analogous to the fact that unless a person has once been a school-boy he cannot eventually be a learned professor. The past ages were quite differenet from the present times. Formerly men's rank and dignity depended entirely upon their individual merits and personal qualifications, with which wealth and riches had little to do. But the case is just the reverse now, and money outweighs all merits and excellence. Moreover, it is hardly practicable to acquire proficiency in any of the fine arts and sciences without the aid of money. Now-a-days all distinction and superiority accrue from the possession of wealth, and every consideration is subordinate to riches. Even a man's dignity of birth cannot be maintained, nor do his personal merits and excellence stand him in stead, without money. Wherefore, notwithstanding the present altered state of affairs, to still persist in directing the course of life according to the old ideas, is certainly the height of folly. Men ought to conduct themselves according to the requirenments of their own times, and they should strive to maintain their position with the means acquired in a fair and a lawful manner, and, if possible, even to improve and better their condition. We may expect, when we consider the good sense and wisdom of our forefathers that, had they lived in times like these, they would have surely regulated their modes of life according to the emergencies of such times, and would have taken care to maintain their rank and position as best they could. For it is usual with wise men to suit themselves to any condition in which they may be placed. The condition of the world is ever on the change, but as it changes, we should change our modes of life accordingly. Wisdom and prudence direct that men should procure their subsistance and improve their conditions in the manner best suited to their own times.

From what I have stated above regarding the former custom of the high and well-born Musalmans—Syyads, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans—in regarding all professions, except those of the pen and the sword, and all

occupations, except that of a gentlman farmer, as low and non-respectable; and from the fact of the prevalence of the same custom among the highest castes of the Hindus, namely, Brahmans and Rajputs, it may be surmised that probably the Musalmans had imitated the Hindus in this custom, or that perhaps they were descended from Brahman and Rajput fathers, who even afgter their conversion to Islam, handed down the customs of their own ancestors to their posterity. But when we find this identical custom to have prevailed among the higher classes of Musalmans in Arabia, Iran, Turkistan and Afghanistan, and the professions of the sword and the pen to be regarded by these nations as the only respectable ones ; and, moreover, as we perceive that no Hindu, of whatever rank or caste, can, after his conversion to Islam, becone affiliated to any of the four principal Musalman races, for the real Syyads, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans are those only whose forefathers came to India from Arabia, Iran, Turkistan and Afghanistan, it is consequently certain that this custom was brought in by those foreign fathers and by them transmitted to the succeeding generations. Neither the Hindus nor the Musalmans had learnt this custom from each other But as the habits and customs of all the Asiatic nations have a pervading similarity, some customs of the one are found to correspond exactly with those of the other.

Among the rest of the Musalmans, that is, among their lower orders, there are men engaged in various professions and trades. They are variously classed, and each class separately denominated, according as their several occupations and the different trades they pursue, such as Jolha, Dhoonya, &c., &c. These classes, speaking roughly, consist of two breeds of men : those descended from foreign ancestors, and those descended from indigenous races and tribes who have embraced Islam. Each class has followed its ancestral occupations generation after generation, and their respective professions and trades denote the race or tribe from which they are respectively descended. That is to say, those of native origin are ethnologically allied to those native castes and tribes who pursue the same trade or have the same occupation as they.

But among the Musalmans there are not men of those very mean and dirty occupations as there are among the Hindus. For in no part of Bengal is there a single Musalman sweeper, scavenger or nightman or the like. The fact is a remarkable one, as it shows that even the lowest classes of the Musalmans are not descended from the lowest Hindu tribes. Such menial occupations only as are followed in Arabia, Iran, &c., are likewise pursued here by Musalman population. As there are no scavengers and nightmen

in those countries, so there are none among the Musalmans here.

Although manual occupations were generally held in disrepute among the higher classes of Musalmans formerly, yet there were some particular arts and crafts which were regarded by them as respectable occupations, and skill in those arts was deemed an accomplishment. For instance, sewing, needle-work and spinning were greatly in vogue among the ladies of the nobility and the gently. These arts gave means of subsistence to poor ladies and gave employment to the rich in their leisure hours and saved them from the evils of idleness. They were consequently much in fashion among all classes, and a proficiency in them was considered a great female accomplishment, Nor was it in any way disgranceful for them to have the produce of such labours sold through the medium of a third person. Such occupations were not restricted to the ladies exclusively but some pious and godly persons also followed them as the purest and fairest means of deriving their livelihood. For instance, it is mentioned in histories in regard to the lives of some illustrious monarchs that, notwithstanding that they had the revenues of whole kingdoms and empires at their comman, they used to procure their own subsistence by manual labour, as by preparing and selling caps and the like.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE MUSALMANS OF BENGAL

We have already proved what is really the origin of the Musalmans of Bengal, and have also shown the reasons why they are so numerous in this country. We now propose to give some particulars of their present condition, a necessary sequel to the various information contained in this book.

The Musalmans of this country were in a prosperous and happy condition during their national government; but on the decline and overthrow of that power they confided themselves to the care of the Ehglish authorities, to enjoy safety of life and property under their protection. For some time their hopes were fully realized; and so long as their rules and practices formed the principles of the British administration, they continued to be benefited by that Government, so much so that their thoughts were scarcely turned towards the future. The unprecedented safety of person and property, which they enjoyed under the British regime, was really a great boon to them. The principles of Government were, however, gradually changed, and the administration was ultimately remodelled upon an entirely new plan. But unfortunately the Musalmans could not so alter their course of conduct as to suit the changes in the administration, and they adhered to their former modes of life and their old habits.

On the one hand, the Musalmans, partially from improvidence and partially from their religious prejudices, held off from English education, and held to their national literatures, *viz.*, the Arabic and the Persian. The result of their backwardness was that they were deprived of the immense advantages accruing from an English education. Would that the matter had been otherwise! For in that case the Musalmans of Bengal would have this day been much in advance of their co-religionists in other parts of India who are making rapid progress, and they could have even surpassed their Hindu countrymen in political power and ascendency because, with regard to the other parts of India, the Musalmans of this country came earlier in contact with the British nation, and were at the outset more directly connected with the English administration than the Hindus.

On the other hand, the English authorities, owing to their being strangers to the country, could not rightly judge the wishes and feelings of Musal-

mans ; and so they suspected their loyalty, thinking that, as they had been supplanted in the ruling power by the British nation, they must naturally entertain hostile feelings and might on occasion act treacherously towards them. The authorities thought further that as the Hindus were the original inhabitants of the country they ought to be given every encouragement and help. Being thus prejudiced against the Muslmans and prepossessed in favour of the Hindus, the rulers began to repress the former and make much of the latter. But their bias towards one side and consequently against the other was quite unwarranted by reason. For while the Musalmans had voluntarily favoured the cause of the English when yet possessing power, how, then, might they be reasonably imagined to entertain hostility when they no longer possessed the power to give effect to such hostility ? Nor could it be right to think of the Hindus as the original inhabitants of this country, for the aboriginal races are the Kols, Sonthals, Bheels, and the like tribes: these and not the Hindus were the first inhabitants of this country. If the Hindus be of the Aryan stock, then the only difference between their relation to these lands and that of the native Musalmans is that they came to this country, from Central Asia, a few centuries prior to the Musalmans.

At last the improvidence of the Musalmans, coupled with the prejudice of the authorities, has produced this dire result, that the Musalmans have become almost totally estranged from all departments of State employment. This circumstance has operated most injuriously on the ancient and high families of the Musalmans, and has, in course of time, caused the utter ruin of many such families and threatens all of them with the same fate. But the common orders of the Musalmans who are most numerous in this country and whose occupation is cultivation, and also those who, failing to obtain State service, have engaged in agricultural pursuits, have been increasing in prosperity, owing to the thriving condition of trade and the outlets thereby opened for agricultural produce, and also owing to the internal peace and the security of property afforded by the British Government. The labouring classes are also in a comfortable and happy condition owing to the increased and rising rates of wages. Consequently, in our opinion, all the inhabitants of this country have been benefited by the British rule, except the high and ancient Musalman families—almost all of whom have been reduced to a deplorable condition, whlie many of them have been totally wrecked and ruined.

It now remains to be considered whether the Musalmans of this country are agreeable to the British rule, and whether they entertain sentiments of loyalty towards that Government. Let Sir W. W. Hunter or Colonel Nassau

Lees say on this matter whatever they please, but, so far as we are aware of the state of feelings of our co-religionist countrymen, as being ourselves of their class and community, we can fully affirm that we Muslamans are not in the least ill-wishers to the Government, and that it is not for a moment our wish that the British Government should be supplanted in this country by either the Russian Power or even by the Amir of Cabul, although the latter is the Muslman ruler of a neighbouring country. In fact, all that we seek and desire is our own welfare and safety, and such a desire on our part is by no means opposed to other religious or social institutions. On the contrary, it is incumbent upon us to seek our personal welfare and benefit without causing harm or doing wrong to others. Our Holy Prophet (may the peace and mercy of God be on him!) has directed us to quit even the Kaba, the House of God, if there be no peace and security within its precincts, and to seek the same in the territory of the Christian King of Abyssinia, if to be found there.* This is the Prophet whom we follow, and his injunctions do we obey, and we seek our welfare in the manner indicated by him. The only complaint we have is with regard to the apathy of Government towards us and our sinking condition. We make this complaint because through such unconcern and indifference on the part of Government, we are gradually sinking lower. Should, however, any one arbitrarily and unjustly interpret this as a sign of disaffection on the part of us Musalmans, let him do so. Being victims of the errors of our rulers, in not obtaining our due share, we are waiting, full of impatient expectations to see what justice the Government in its paternal care to our claims will do. We trust, however, that when our rulers become better acquainted with us, they will surely show a greater consideration for us.

Note to Chapter I.

The Census of 1891 shows that in Bengal Mahomedans have increased by 1,953,620. In 1881 their number was 21,704,727, and in 1891 was

* During the early days of Islam, while it barely maintained itself in the Hashimite quarter of Mecca, and Mahomed relied for protection against the unbelieving Koreish mainly upon his uncle Abu Talib in the fifth year of the Prophet's ministry, took place the first Hegira or flight from the land of persecution to "a country wherein no one was wronged,—a land of righteousness." This was the Christian Kindgdom of Abyssinia ruled over by the Najashee or Negus, "a just king." Among the emigrants on this occasion were the Prophet's own son-in-law, Othman, the son of Affan, and his wife, the Prophet's daughter. Here the emigrants were kindly treated, and all the efforts of the Koreish to dislodge them were unavailing. Next year, the sixth of the ministry, the persecution at Mecca redoubling, a second emigration thither took place, more numerous than the first, so that we are told, the numbr of the Faithful in this Christian country reached 101, without counting their little ones. Here they dwelt in peace and quietness: many of them remained till long after the victorious promulgation of Islam, and did not rejoin Mahomed until the expedition to Khaiber, in the seventh year of the Hegira.—*Rauzat-us-Safa.*

23,658,347. It is most probable that the proselytizing character of Islam has gained some converts, but the actual conversion from other faiths to that of Islam, during the decade of 1881—1891, has had very little to do with the cause of this increase. On this point the Census Officer's remarks in the Census Report are just and correct. He says : "It is certain that the growth of Musalmanism in Bengal Proper, is connected rather with physical than doctrinal forces." It is not statistically proved that any part of Bengal contains a very considerable number of converts who were non-Musalmans in 1881, but embraced Islam within the last ten years ; neither is it shown by figures that any particular district of Bengal has added a few hundreds of converts to the church of Islam. The increase of Musalmans, as disclosed by the Census of 1891, resulted partly from the better management with which the last Census operations were carried on, and cheifly from the fact that the Musalmans who, formerly, being under a false impression that the object of the Census was either to levy some new tax per head or to recruit men for the army from among them, concealed their real number, have now, by lapse of time and experience, had these misapprehensions removed and therefore gave an accurate enumeration of themselves and the members of their family The increase of Musalmans is also largely due to polygamy and widow-re-marriage, which are specially more common among the people of the eastern districts where the Mahomedan population is predominant. The Musalmans, with their varied and more nutritious dietary, are of superior physique, and this increases their growth and fecundity. Thus one of the striking features which the Census of 1891 presents, is that the Muslamans of Bengal Proper, within the last nineteen years, have not only overtaken their Hindu brethern, but have out-numbered them by a million and-a-half.

APPENDIX B

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE EAST PAKISTAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION

(**Upto March, 1968**)

1. Dr. Mafizullah Kabir, M.A. (Dac.), Ph.D. (London). Professor and Head of the Department of History, Uinversity of Dacca.
2. Dr. Md. Mohar Ali, M.A. (Dac.), Ph.D. (London), Barrister-at-Law. Reader, Department of History, University of Dacca.
3. Mr. W. Rahman, M.A. (Dac.), M.A. (Oxon), Reader, Department of History, University of Dacca.
4. Dr. M.A. Khair, M.A. (Dac.), M.A., Ph.D. (U.S.A.), Senior Lecturer, Department of History, University of Dacca.
5. Dr. A. M. Chowdhury, M.A. (Dac.) Ph.D. (London), Senior Lacturer, Department of History, University of Dacca.
6. Dr. K. M. Mohsin, M.A. (Dac.), Ph.D. (London), Senior Lecturer, Department of History University of Dacca.
7. Dr. A. B. Muhiuddin Mahmood, M.A. (Dac.), Ph.D. (London), Senior Lecturer, Department of History, University of Dacca.
8. Mr. S. C. Bhattacharyya, M.A. (Dac.), Senior Lecturer, Department of History, University of Dacca.
9. Mr. Md. Shirajul Islam, M.A. (Dac.), Lecturer, Department of History, University of Dacca.
10. Mr. Sharifuddin Ahmad, M.A. (Dac.), Lecturer, Department of History, University of Dacca.
11. Dr. A. F. S. Ahmed, M.A. (Cal.), M.A. (U.S.A.), Ph.D. (London), Professor and Head of the Department of History, University of Rajshahi.
12. mr. Md. Nuruzzaman, M.A. Vill. Balla, P.O. Balla Bazar, Dist. Mymensingh.
13. Mr. Muhammad Tamizuddin, M.A. Principal, Gournadi College, P.O. Gournadi, Dist. Barisal.
14. Mr. M. Masud Khan, M.A. (Karachi), Controller of Examinations, University of Dacca.
15. Mr. Muhammad Ruhul Amin Mazumdar, M.A., EPCS, Administrative Officer, N. I. P. A. Dacca.
16. Mr. Syed Badruddin Hussain, M.A. Inspector of Colleges, Universiy of Dacca.
17. Mr. Mohammad Arshad, M.A. Professor of History, Q. A. College, Dacca.
18. Mr. Kausar Ali, M.A. 77, Patuatuly, Dacca - 1.
19. Mr. Md. Manzoor Ahmad Hanafi, M.A. Deptt. of Islamic History & Culture, Quaid-i-Azam College, Dacca - 1.
20. Mr. Ali Nur, M.A. (Deceased), 77, Inner Circular Road, Motijheel, Dacca - 2.
21. Mrs. Taslima Abed, M.A., 128/1, New Eskaton, Dacca.
22. Mr. Md. Hasanul Alam, M.A. Professor of History, Daulatpur College, Khulna.
23. Mr. Muhammad Musa Ansari, M.A., B. L. College, Daulatpur, Dist. Khulna.

24. Mr. Ekramul Huq Chowdhury, m.a.,
28, Stadium, (Rio Furnishers), Dacca - 2.
25. Mr. Muhammad Faizul Kabir, m.a.,
Executive Officer, Pakistan Imports & Exports,
9-E, Motijheel, Dacca - 2.
26. Mr. Mobin Uddin Ahmed, m.a.
64/2, Ram Krishna Mission Road, Dacca - 2.
27. Mr. Md. Akbar Hossain, m.a.,
Professor of History, Notre Dame College, Dacca.
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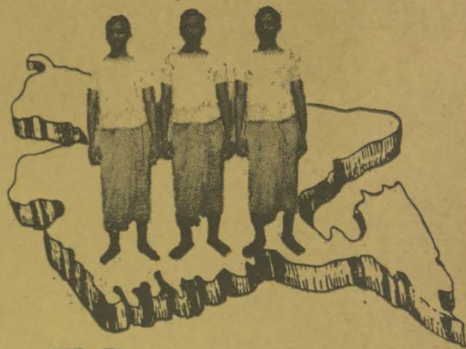
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